Śrī Vrajamandala Parikrama

FIRST DRAFT

By His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tīrtha Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math

Sector 20-B, Chandigarh

Śrī Vraja-mandala Parikrama 1984

Other books by Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj in English:

Sri Chaitanya: His Life and Associates

A Taste of Transcendence

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Suddha Bhakti

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Printed in India by Sree Chaitanya Gauḍiya Maṭh, Sector 20B, Chandigarh – 160020

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Introduction

In 1932, starting from the holy appearance day of Sriman Madhvacarya, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda performed a one month long circumambulation of Śrī Vraja-mandala along with many devotees from various parts of India. Śrīla Prabhupāda and his associates visited the places of the pastimes of Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and performed kirtana. His associates also performed kirtana in various languages to give pleasure to the multilingual pilgrims.

Following in the footsteps of Śrīla Prabhupāda, our gurudeva, Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaja, held the Vraja-mandala parikrama every year. Later, it was changed to every third year. In 1978, after performing that year's Vraja-mandala parikrama, Srila Gurudeva performed the pastimes of illness and disappearance. After this, his most affectionate disciple and present president of Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Gosvami Maharaja, along with the Governing Body Committee of the Math, organized the great event of the Eighty- Four Krosa Vraja-mandala Parikrama.

This book is Srila Tirtha Maharaja's recollection of one such parikrama performed by Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math in 1984. To avoid this work becoming too voluminous, the various descriptions are given in brief.

The parikrama started at Mathura and the six main camps along the route were: Mathura, Govardhana, Barsana, Nandagrama, Gokul Mahavana and Vrindavana. During the parikrama the locations of the various pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the twelve forests constituting Vraja-mandala were visited while performing sankirtana (devotional singing and chanting).

Participating in this parikrama were: Śrī Srimad Bhakti Pramod Puri Goswami Maharaja, Srimat Krishna Keshava Brahmacari, Sri Srimad Bhakti Sarana Trivikrama Maharaja, President of the Math Sri Srimad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja, Secretary Śrī Srimad Bhakti Vigyan Bharati Maharaja and others.

Parampujyapada Śrī Srimad Bhakti Promod Puri Maharaja, although 87 years old at the time, walked on foot and visited various places daily while giving discourses on Srimad Bhagavatam. Everyone was amazed to see him walking so at such an advanced stage of life. Due to the presence of many north Indian devotees and, upon the order of Srila Puri Maharajaa, Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja would explain the importance of each place in Hindi and continue to speak Harikatha at the evening assembly. Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaja was the main kirtana singer during the daily sankirtana processions.

Only by great fortune does one get the opportunity to serve the devotees performing the circumambulation of Vraja.

1 Camp: Mathurā-dhama

(Friday, Oct 5, 1984-Tuesday, Oct 9, 1984)

Although Mathurā is mentioned in all the Puranas, only the Ramayana and Harivamsa Purana describe the origin of this sacred place. The Ramayana relates that there once lived a devotee of Lord Siva named Madhudaitya. Through hard penances, Madhudaitaya pleased Mahadeva Siva and achieved a unique and powerful trident from him. In reciprocation of the prayer of Madhudaitya, Mahadeva gave him the blessing that, as long as the trident remained with Madhudaitya's son, no one would be able to kill him. After receiving this boon, Madhudaitya impatiently waited for the birth of a son. As it is well known that the words of Mahadeva cannot prove to be false, in due course of time Madhudaitya begot a son. This son was named Lavana.

However, it was a twist of destiny that Lavana grew up as a demoniac boy with an impolite and rude nature. When Madhudaitya could no longer tolerate the tortures of his son, he gave the trident he had received from Mahadeva to Lavana and then went to Varunalaya, the palace of Lord Varuna.

Having received the trident, Lavana's tortures and misbehaviors increased. He even tormented sages living in the sacred forests. Seeing no way out of their miserable plight, the sages approached Lord Ramacandra and informed him about the atrocities committed by Lavana. Hearing the unfortunate tales of the sages, Śrī Ramacandra sent Shatrughana to defeat Lavana. After challenging the demonic Lavana, a fierce battle between the two ensued for a long time, culminating in the killing of Lavana by Shatrughana. As word of the death of Lavana spread, all the demigods were pleased and came to grant a boon to Shatrughana. When Shatrughna saw that the demigods were eager to grant him a boon, he said: "If you wish to grant me a boon, please grant that the divinely constructed Madhupuri (Mathurā) will soon prosper and be transformed into a capital". After this, Shatrughana brought an army for the protection of that place, along with many innovations to make the city beautiful and amply fit for habitation.

In the course of this work, Shatrughana renovated all the buildings constructed by Lavana.

hatva ca lavanam rakso madhuputram mahavalam shatrugano Mathurā nama purim yatra cakar vai tatreva deva devasya sanindhyam harimedhasam sarvapaphare tasmin tapstirthe chakara sah

Vishnu Purana

Madhuvana, where Shatrughana killed the powerful Lavana, the son of the Madhu demon, and built the city named Mathurā, is also the residing place of Lord Hari's devotee, Mahadeva. He performed penances in this all-sin destroying pilgrimage place.

Śrī Bhakti-ratnakara grantha describes the authenticity of Skanda Purana's Mathurā Khanda:

madhorvanam prathamato yatra vai mathurā puri madhu daityo hato yatra harinavishvamurtina

In the Ramayana, Mathurā is described as Madhupuri or Madhura, but in other Puranas and Mahabharata, the name Mathurā is found. So, it can be deduced that the Madhupuri or Madhura described in the Ramayana only become known as Mathurā at a later date. (Some archeologists say that a small village named Maho situated in the southwestern part of Mathurā city is the Madhupura of the ancient king, Madhudaitya: 'eyam madhupuri ramya mathurā devanirmita')

After the disappearance of Shatrughana's dynasty, Mathurā was ruled by Shoorsena. According to the proofs of Śrīmad Bhagavatam, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the best among the Yadus, appeared in the dynasty of Shoorsena. This Mathurā became more famous when Kamsa made it his capital and extended his reign from there. Later, King Yudhisthira bestowed the kingdom of Mathurā to Vajranabha, the great grandson of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, when he himself embarked upon mahaprasthana (the ultimate journey). This is described in the scriptures. Śrī Vajranabha installed several deities of Kṛṣṇa at various places in Vraja-mandala.

During his Vraja-mandala-parikrama, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda explained to his disciples:

vaikunthajjanito vara madhupuri tatrapi rasotsvada vrindaranyamudara paniramana sttrapi goverdhana radhakundamihapi gokulpateh premamrataplavanat kuryadasya virajato giritate seva viveki na kaha

"This place (Mathurā) where you are sitting is better than Vaikuntha. The Supreme Lord Himself appeared here. Here, all the atheistic sects were destroyed— Kamsa being the ideal for the atheistic smarta sect. The followers of Kamsa were also destroyed here. Rajak (a washerman) is the symbol of this sect of atheistic ritualistic and fruitive workers (Karma-jada-smarta Sampradaya)."

The concept of 'satvam vishuddham vasudev shabdam' came into being here only.

Followers of hathayoga or rajayoga, with their false renunciation and artificial practices, have at the root of their thoughts the idea that they are the Lord, and are averse to becoming a servant of the true Supreme Lord. These people never understand the reality of devotional practice to the Supreme. Sometimes they say that they have heard Kṛṣṇa-katha in dramas or have heard or read the descriptions of Śrīmad Bhagavatam. However, in reality they have never heard any description of Śrī Kṛṣṇa—they have never taken the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru and have never read Śrīmad Bhagavatam. Only those who perform one hundred percent bhajana, and perform bhajana for twenty-four hours out of twenty-four, are qualified to speak Kṛṣṇa-katha. If Śrīmad Bhagavatam is heard from any other source, it cannot be understood. No person except one who is completely devoted to the Supreme Lord can be called 'guru'. One will have to take shelter at the lotus feet of a guru who devotes twenty-four hours of his day to Hari- bhajana. One cannot devote one's self to Hari-bhajana if one does not remain in the shelter of a pure devotee.

Kamsa thought that he would kill Kṛṣṇa but Kṛṣṇa is not such a destructable thing. Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed eighteen demons. Some sects who are opposed to

devotees, still exist in the world following the lineage of those demons destroyed by Kṛṣṇa. If one does not kill these demons who are envious of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's devotees, one will not be able to remain as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. He will fall down from the practices of Vaisnavism, and become annihilistic—a karmi or sense enjoyer.

mallānām aśanir nṛṇāṁ nara-varaḥ strīṇāṁ smaro mūrtimān gopānāṁ sva-jano 'satāṁ kṣiti-bhujāṁ śāstā sva-pitroḥ śiśuḥ mṛtyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣāṁ tattvaṁ paraṁ yogināṁ vṛṣṇīnāṁ para-devateti vidito raṅgaṁ gataḥ sāgrajaḥ

(Srimad Bhagavatam 1.43.17)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa came to Mathurā to kill Kamsa. This Mathurā is not a thing of argument rather it is a place of transcendental knowledge. Our Śrī Baladeva and Śrī Kṛṣṇa came to Mathurā to kill Kamsa. Kamsa was an atheist. The Name Form, Attributes, Eternal Pastimes and associates of the Lord are special, but due to his strength, Kamsa was not ready to accept all these things. Kamsa was unaware that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not subject to the laws of nature, and that the mayavadis (followers of the doctrine of maya—the concept that the Supreme Lord is the by-product of maya or illusion) have no capacity to terminate eternal Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Mayavadis have no right to enter into the kingdom of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The external energy has no admittance there:

sravae mathurā nayane mathurā vadane mathurā hrdaya mathurā purato mathurā parato mathurā mathurā mathurā mathurā mathurā

At the time of the pastime of wandering through the twelve forests, Lord Śrī Gauranga Mahaprabhu started parikrama from the Mathurā region. Following Śrī Gauranga's pastime, His associate Om Vishnupad 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, also started Vraja-mandala-parikrama from Mathurā City.

According to Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dasa Kaviraja, the Mathurā- parikrama pastimes of Śrī Gauranga are viewed in the following way:

mathurā-nikaṭe āilā—mathurā dekhiyā daṇḍavat hañā paḍe premāviṣṭa hañā

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 17.155)

"When He approached Mathurā and saw the city, He immediately fell to the ground and offered obeisances with great ecstatic love."

mathurā āsiyā kailā 'viśrānti-tīrthe' snāna 'janma-sthāne' 'keśava' dekhi' karilā praṇāma

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 17.156)

"When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu entered the city of Mathurā, He took His bath at Viśrāma-ghāṭa. He then visited the birthplace of Kṛṣṇa and saw the Deity named Keśavajī. He offered His respectful obeisances to this Deity."

premānande nāce, gāya, saghana huṅkāra prabhura premāveśa dekhi' loke camatkāra

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 17.157)

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu chanted, danced and made loud vibrations, all the people were astonished to see His ecstatic love."

eka-vipra paḍe prabhura caraṇa dhariyā prabhu-saṅge nṛtya kare premāviṣṭa hañā

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 17.158)

"A brāhmaṇa fell at the Lotus Feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahaprabhu and then began to dance with Him in ecstatic love."

duṅhe preme nṛtya kari' kare kolākuli hari kṛṣṇa kaha duṅhe bale bāhu tuli'

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 17.159)

"Both of them danced in ecstatic love and embraced one another. Raising their arms, they said, 'Chant the Holy Names of Hari and Kṛṣṇa!'"

yamunāra 'cabbiśa ghāṭe' prabhu kaila snāna sei vipra prabhuke dekhāya tīrtha-sthāna

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 17.190)

"Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu bathed in twenty-four ghāṭas along the banks of the Yamunā, and the brāhmaṇa showed Him all the places of pilgrimage."

In Śrī Bhakti-ratnakara grantha composed by Śrī Narahari Cakravarti Thakura, references describing Mathurā-mandala are given from Adi Varaha Purana, Padma Purana, Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Skanda Purana, and Brahmanda Purana:

viṁśatir yojananaṁ tu mathurāṁ mama manḍalam pade pade 'śvamedhīyaṁ punyaṁ natra vicarana

"This Mathurā-mandala is spread over the area of twenty yojanas. During the parikrama of Mathurā-mandala, every step gives the same benefit as an Ashvamedha- yajna."

is also written that parikrama of the Mathurā region performed either knowingly or unknowingly, destroys the collective sins of many births:

bhadra-śrī-loha-bhāṇḍira-mahā-tāla-khadirakam bahūla kumuda kāmya madhu

vrndāvanam tathā dvādaśaitad vana ramya śrī-kṇa-prīti-da sadā mahattvam eā jānanti bhaktā nānye kadācana

Padma Purana describes twelve forests (vanas), seven situated on the western side of the Kalindi River and five on the eastern side. In the western part the forests are: 1. Madhuvana 2. Talvana 3. Kumudvana 4. Bahulavana 5. Kamyavana 6. Khadirvana 7. Vrindavana. In the eastern part they are: 1. Bhadravana 2. Bhandirvana 3. Vilvavana 4. Lauhvana 5. Mahavana (Gokula).

On 18th Asvin, Friday 5th October (Ekadashi-tithi), the present acarya of Śrī Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Śrīmad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Gosvami Maharaja, together with his disciples, arrived at Mathurā very late. So, being tired, they did not participate in the parikrama the next morning. At 4:00 pm on 6th October, the devotees, along with a sankirtana procession, visited Śrī Pipleshwar Mahadeva, Śrī Viśrāma-ghāṭa, Śrī Vishranti deva, Adi Varaha Kṛṣṇa Varaha, Sweta Varaha and Śrī Gatasharana Narayana, and then returned to the dharmashala (guest house) at 6:30 pm. Following the instructions of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Promod Puri Goswami Maharaja, Śrīmad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaja read the appropriate scripture and, in Bengali and Hindi, explained the significance of every holy place.

Pipleshwara Mahadeva:

Śrī Vishnu-dhama Mathurā Puri, is protected by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved Ksetrapal Mahadeva (Lord Siva) at four surrounding places. On the eastern side, Kshetrapal Mahadeva is called Śrī Pipleshwara Mahadeva and on the western side, he is known as Śrī Bhuteshwara, with Śrī Gopeshwara in the north and Śrī Rangeshwara in the south.

nimna-gānāṁ yathā gaṅgā devānām acyuto yathā vaiṣṇavānāṁ yathā śambhuḥ purāṇānām idam tathā

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.13.16)

“Among rivers, Gaṅgā is the best, among gods, Acyuta (Vishnu) is the best and among Vaishnavas, Shambu (Siva) is considered to be the best. Similarly, among Purāṇas, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the best.”

Pure devotees worship Mahadeva thinking of him as the beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They also pray to him to get pure causeless devotion to the Lotus Feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa but they do not worship Mahadeva as an independent god. The method of worship of Kshetrapal Mahadeva for Vaishnavas, is written in Śrī Bhakti-ratnakara, quoting the reference of Śrī Stavamrtalahari:

jaya vṛndāvanāvani-pate jaya soma soma-maule sanandana-sanātana-nāradādi-prapūjya gopīśvara vraja-vilāsi-yugāṅghri-padme prema prayaccha nirupādhikaṁ namo namaste

“O Vrindavana Kshetrapal, O beautiful Chandrashekara, O Gopishwara, you are worshipable by the four Kumaras: Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana and Sanat Kumara, and by Narada and other sages. O Gopishwara! All glories unto you! All glories unto you! Please give me unfettered love for the Lotus Feet of the Divine Couple Who sport in Vraja—Śrī Radha and Govinda. My obeisances unto you again and again!”

In modern times, the founder of the genuine flow of the river of pure devotion, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura, has written about Siva-tattva in his explanation of the 45th Verse of the 6th Chapter of Brahma-saṁhitā, as follows:

kṣīraṁ yathā dadhi vikāra-viśeṣa-yogāt sañjāyate na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti hetoḥ

yaḥ śambhutām api tathā samupaiti kāryād govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

(Brahma-saṁhitā 5.46)

“Just as milk is transformed into curd by the action of acids, yet the resulting curd is neither the same as, nor different from, its cause, viz. milk, so I adore the primeval Lord Govinda of Whom the state of Śambhu is a transformation for the performance of the work of destruction.”

PURPORT: (The real nature of Śambhu, the presiding deity of Maheśa-dhāma, is described.) Śambhu is not a second Godhead other than Kṛṣṇa. Those who entertain such a discriminating sentiment, commit a great offense against the Supreme Lord. The supremacy of Śambhu is subservient to that of Govinda; hence they are not really different from each other. The non-distinction is established by the fact that just as milk treated with acid turns into curd, so Godhead becomes subservient when He Himself attains a distinct personality by the addition of a particular element of adulteration. This personality has no independent initiative. The said adulterating principle is constituted of a combination of the stupefying quality of the deluding energy, the quality of nonplenitude of the marginal potency and a slight degree of the ecstatic, cognitive principle of the plenary spiritual potency. This specifically adulterated reflection of the principle of the subjective portion of the Divinity is Sadāśiva, in the form of the effulgent masculine- symbol-god, Śambhu, from whom Rudradeva is manifested. In the work of mundane creation as the material cause, in the work of preservation by the destruction of sundry asuras and, in the work of destruction to conduct the whole operation, Govinda manifests Himself as guṇa-avatāra in the form of Śambhu who is the separated portion of Govinda imbued with the principle of His subjective plenary portion. The personality of the destructive principle in the form of time has been identified with that of Śambhu by scriptural evidences that have been adduced in the commentary. The purport of the Bhāgavata ślokas, viz., ‘vaiṣṇavānāṁ yathā śambhuḥ’, etc., is that, Śambhu, in pursuance of the will of Govinda, works in union with his consort Durgādevī by his own time energy. He teaches pious duties (dharma) as stepping-stones to the attainment of spiritual service in the various tantra-śāstras,

etc., suitable for jīvas in different grades of the conditional existence. In obedience to the will of Govinda, Śambhu maintains and fosters the religion of pure devotion by preaching the cult of illusionism (Māyāvāda) and the speculative āgama-śāstras. The fifty attributes of individual souls are manifest in a far vaster measure in Śambhu and five additional attributes not attainable by jīvas are also partly found in him. So, Śambhu cannot be called a jīva. He is the lord of jīva but yet partakes of the nature of a separated portion of Govinda.

The word 'Pipal' signifies the Peepal tree, which is worshippable by all followers of sanatana-dharma. It is said that Brahma resides in the roots of the Peepal, Vishnu in the bark, Gangadevi inside the tree, Siva resides in the branches and the demigods in the leaves. Hence, the peepal tree is worshipped as the residence of the gods, and Lord Siva of the Pipal tree is known as Pipleshwara Mahadeva. The Ayurveda describes many kinds of medicines derived from the Peepal tree, including a remedy for asthma—namely the powdered fruits of the tree mixed with water and taken for fourteen days.

sei vishrama ghata, utarila tatha…

(Bhakti-ratnakara 4.190)

Śrī Viśrāma-ghāṭa:

Bhakti-ratnakara tells us about Śrī Viśrāma-ghāṭa as follows:

To the north and south of Viśrāma-ghāṭa, there are twelve ghāṭas in each direction. The twelve ghāṭas to the north are known as North Kot and those of the south are known as South kot.

North Kot: 1. Manikarnika 2. Asikunda 3. Sayamantirtha (Swami- ghāṭa or Vasudeva- ghāṭa) 4. Dharapatan Tirtha 5. Nagtirtha 6. Vaikuntha-ghāṭa 7. Khatabharan-ghāṭa 8. Somtirtha (Gaughata) 9. Kṛṣṇaganga 10. Chakratirtha 11.

Vighnaraja- ghāṭa 12. Dashshwamedh-ghāṭa

South Kot: 1. Avimukta 2. Adhirood 3. Guhya 4. Prayag 5. Kankal 6. Tinduk (later known as Bengali-ghāṭa, as inhabitants of Bengal used to live near it) 7. Surya-ghāṭa 8. Vatswani 9. Dhurva-ghāṭa 10. Rishitirtha 11. Mokshatirtha 12. Bodhitirtha

It is said that Ravana performed penance here and hence it is also called 'Ravanakotti'. Among the twenty-four ghāṭas, Vishram-ghāṭa is the best.

Śrī Viśrāma-tirtha or Śrī Vishranti-tirtha

ei dekh mahatirtha śrī vishranti nama kames vadhi kṛṣṇa ethaya karila vishrama

(Bhakti-ratnakara 5.231)

Śrīman Mahāprabhu performed unique pastimes in Śrī Viśrāma-tirtha.

tatra tirtha maharaja vishrantilokavisrutama bhramitva sarvatirthani vishranti yanti sasvatim

(Skanda Purana)

"O Maharaja! The Vishranti-tirtha of Mathurā is famous everywhere. After wandering in all the pilgrimage places, people get the pleasure of eternal rest here (Nitya Vishram). One can take rest from the fire-like miseries of this world

in this Vishranti-tirtha.”

The importance of Vishranti-tirtha is described in Saura Purana in the following way:

tato vishrantitirthakhyam tirthamahovinashanam samsar marusancharakleshvishrantidam nrnam tatra tirtho krtasnno yoaccharyedachyutam nara sa mukto bhavasantapadamrtatvay

(Bhakti-ratnakara 5.241-242)

Vishranti-tirtha is the place that gives people rest from miseries produced by wandering in the desert of this world as well as destroying their sins. A person, who having bathed there, worships the sun, becomes free from the miseries of this world and becomes eligible for immortality. Bathing in the Yamunā provides hundreds of times more benefit than bathing at other pilgrimage places, but bathing at Viśrāma-tirtha provides millions of times more benefit. It is said in the scriptures that Śrī Kṛṣṇa resides in the lotus-shaped Mathurā-dhama. Śrī Vishranti deva resides in the eastern petal of this lotus, Śrī Govardhana resident, Śrī Haradeva, resides in the western petal, Śrī Govindeva is seated in the north petal and Śrī Varahadeva in the south petal. In 1932, under the leadership of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, a Vraja-mandala- parikrama was organized. It is written in the record of that pilgrimage: “In each of eight directions, three deities are always seated, and thus twenty four deities are seated in their dhamas in arca-avatāra form. It is known that of these twenty four deities, Śrī Jagannatha in Neelachal, Śrī Madhava in Prayagraja, Śrī Madhusudana in Mander, Śrī Varadaraja in Vishnukanchi, Śrī Hari in Mayapur, Śrī Vasudeva in Anandaranya and Śrī Keshavdeva in Mathurā, are regularly residing.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is seated in His Vishranti-deva form in the place where He took rest after killing Kamsa. Here Yamunā’s ghāṭa is called Viśrāma-ghāṭa or Vishranti-ghāṭa.

vasudevo mahabahurjagatasvami janardana vishram kurute tatra tena vishranti samgita

(Varaha Purana)

It is written in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta by Śrī Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraja Goswami, that Śrīman Mahāprabhuji along with Snoriya Vipra, a disciple of Śrīla Madhavendra Puripada, performed snana-lila at all twenty-four ghāṭas:

yamunāra 'cabbiśa ghāṭe' prabhu kaila snāna sei vipra prabhuke dekhāya tīrtha-sthāna svayambhu, viśrāma, dīrgha-viṣṇu, bhūteśvara mahāvidyā, gokarṇādi dekhilā vistara

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 17.190-191)

ohe śrīnivasa catuvimsate ghatete mahaprabhu kaila snana mahananda cite

(Bhakti-ratnakara Fifth Wave)

"Just as Mahāprabhu performed the darshana pastime of Keśavadeva at Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janamastami after his snana pastime at Vishrama-ghāṭa, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda along with his disciples and loving devotees, visited Śrī Keśavadeva after bathing at Viśrāma-tirtha."

Adi-Varaha (Kṛṣṇa-Varaha), Sveta Varaha

vasati daśana-śikhare dharaīi tava lagnā śaśini kalañka-kaleva nimagnā

keśava dhṛta-śūkara-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare

(Śrī Jayadeva's Daśāvatāra-stotra, 3rd Verse)

"O Keśava! O Supreme Lord, You have assumed the form of a Boar! O Lord! The planet Earth rested on Your tusk and it appeared like the Moon engraved with spots."

The 3rd Canto of Śrīmad Bhagavatam describes the appearance of Varahadeva in the following way:

When Brahma desired to create, a male and female named Svayambhuva Manu and Shatarupa respectively, were born from his body. Following the instructions of Brahma, Svayambhuva Manu accepted Shatarupa as his wife. Brahma then ordered Manu to create the living beings. Wishing to obey the order of his father, Manu requested Brahma to make arrangements to lift the earth out of the celestial waters so that the newly created people would have a place to reside.

While Brahma was contemplating how to rescue the earth, a small Varaha Deity appeared from his nostril, which quickly changed to the size of a large elephant and began to trumpet loudly. Varahadeva killed the demon Hiranyakashipu in the waters and lifted the Earth with His tusks. Seeing this unique pastime of lifting the Earth, Brahma and the other demigods and rishis were filled with wonder. They satisfied the Lord by several heartfelt prayers.

The record of the Vraja-mandala-parikrama in 1932 under the leadership of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Thakura, describes the greatness of Sveta-Varahadeva in the following manner:

In the locality of Choube's, there is a place called Manikchowk, where there is a small temple of Adi-Varahadeva. This four-handed Varaha Deity is displaying the feat of lifting the Earth with His tusk while crushing the demon Hiranyaksha with His Lotus-Feet. There is another temple some distance away, where one can see the white-stoned Deity of Śrī Varaha. Descriptions of the Deity of Adi-Varaha and Shveta-Varaha can be found in Varaha Purana. Accordingly, two Varaha Deities can be seen here. Adi- Varaha used to be worshipped by a

Brahmin sage by the name of Kapila, but Devaraja Indra took the Deity of Lord Varaha from him. Later on, Ravana carried away this Varaha Deity to Lanka. After killing the sinful Ravana, Ramachandra brought the Deity to Ayodhya and, after killing the demon Lavana, Śrī Shatrughana established this Deity in Mathurā. Neither the outward show of Vishnu worship by the fruitive worker Lord Indra, nor the atheistic behaviour of Ravana, could endure, and thus Śrī Ramachandra established true devotion to Lord Vishnu.

Gatshram Narayan:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original form of Narayan. After killing Kamsa, he performed Vishram lila. The Gatshram Narayan deity is some distance away from Vishram ghat instide the market.

ei gatarsramdeva dekha ramyasthane! Sarvatirthe falaprapti isvara darshane!!

(Bhakti-ratnakara 5.246)

sarva-tīrtheṣu yat snanaṁ sarva-tīrtheṣu yat phalam tat phalaṁ labhate devi dṛṣṭva devaṁ gataśramam

(adi-varahe)

O goddess, what is the reward of taking bath in all the pilgrim places?. That reward can be achieved only by visiting Gatshramdev in Vishram ghat.

On Sunday 7th October, arrangements for the parikrama of Madhuvana, Talavana & Kumudvana were made in the camp of Śrī Math. Four reserve busses were arranged for pilgrims. Several devotees from Dehradun also arrived on the same day. The time for travel was set at 7am, but the buses were late so it

could only start at 9 am. After the parikrama of Madhuvana, Talavana & Kumudvana, the devotees returned to Bhavani Dharmshala Mathurā at 8 pm.

After reaching Madhuvana, the pilgrims first visited the temples of Śrī Gauriya Sevashrama, Madhuvanbihari ŚrīHari, Kṛṣṇakunda and Śrī Balaramji temple. They kept the kitchen and other luggage in Śrī Gauriya Sevashrama of Madhuvana and some devotees remained there to prepare prasadam.

Śrī Gauriya Sevasrama:

In Madhuvana was established by Śrīla Bhakti Sambhand Parvat Maharaj previously known as Śrī Dina Bandhu Brahmachari, a disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj. He later donated it completely to the lotus feet of Śrī Guruji. Śrī Dina Bandhu Prabhu was very strong. When the 84 kosa Parikrama was arranged on foot under the guidance of Śrīla Madhava Maharaj, Shri Dinabandhu Brahmchari used to go ahead and make a big contribution in all the arrangements.

Madhuvanbihari Shri Hari:

It is mentioned in the record of Śrī Braj Mandala Parikrama organized during 1932, under the auspices of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Siddhanta Goswami Prabhupada that the first among the twelve forests (Vana) is 'Madhuvana'. This was the residence of the demon 'Madhu' hence this is named after him as 'the place where Lord Hari killed the demon Madhu'. Here also Lord Baladeva tasted the 'Honey' the pastime being known as the 'Madu-paan lila' of Lord Balarama ('madhu' means honey and 'paan' means drink).

'madhu –daitya vadha etha kaila bhagwan. ei hetu madhu-vana Mathurā akhya-

ana'.

(from Bhakti Ratnakara)

The temple of the presiding deity, His Lordship Madhuvana Bihari, is situated at some distance from the western bank of 'Madhu Kunda'. The structure of the temple is like an ordinary house. On the main altar resides the deity of Śrī Madhuvana Bihari. He is holding a garland with his left hand and a weapon with his right hand. This is the weapon with which he killed the demon Madhu. Near the temple is situated the residence of the demon which is also where he was slain. All the priests of the temple are householders. Formerly, four brothers were head priests who took turns to perform all sorts of prayers.

'ramayam madhu-vanam naam visnu-sthana-manu-tamam. yada-dris-taca manujo devi sarvan kamana-vapa-anuayat. tatra-kundam swaccha-jalam nilo-tapal-vibhushitam. tatra sananena danena vanchitam pha-amapanuyata'.

- adi varaha O Goddess! The residing place of Lord Vishnu 'Madhu – Vana' is most pious and pleasing. A visit ato this place enables one to achieve whatever he desires. There is a pond at this place whose water is cool and crystal clear and filled with blue lotus flowers. One's desire is fulfilled instantaneously if he or she takes a dip in this pond.

Kṛṣṇa Kunda (Madhu-kunda):

Madhu Kunda or Kṛṣṇa Kunda is a large tank or pond of water which has three built-up sides and one left natural. If you look at the pond with your material eyes, you will find the water is muddy. But residents of Vraja bathe in this pond. During our circumambulation, many devotees offered obeisances at this place, sprinkled holy water of the pond on their head and some also took holy bath.

Śrī Balarama Temple:

Śrī Balarama temple is situated just opposite Kṛṣṇa Kunda. In formerly times the temple was presided over by a beautiful deity of Śrī Balarama but a few years ago the deity disappeared. The priest of the temple laboured hard to install new deity, eventually succeeding. During circumambulation, the priest of the temple explained and narrated the pastime of Lord Balarama tasting wine as mentioned in the scriptures. Devotees were pleased to learn about the pastime of Lord Baladeva from a resident of Vraja.

Talvana (Tarsi):

Next the group of devotees traveled by bus to Talavana which is almost two and a half miles southwest of Madhuvana. Talavana is now known as Tarsi, the temple there being situated on high ground. The temple is presided over by three deities, of whom Śrī Baladeva in the center. On his right is the deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa playing his flute and on the left of Baladeva is Śrīmati Revati. Further downhill from the temple there is an old pond known as 'Baladeva Kunda'. Devotees sprinkled water from the pond on their head and circumambulated the temple while performing sankirtana.

aho taalvanam yatra talei-aharato-'sura hitaya yadvananca atmakrida-nkaya ca

(from Skanda Purana – Mathurā Khanda)

Oho! This is the pious Talavana, where Lord Kṛṣṇa executed one of his pastimes for the welfare of the 'Yadavas'.

This pastime is illustrated in the Tenth canto, 16th chapter of Śrīmad

Bhagwatam: When Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarama became six years old, Śrī Nanda and the other cowherd elders permitted them to take care of the oxen, cows and calves. The Lord exhibited various opulences for the pleasure of his cowherd friends,the above- mentioned pastime being one such transcendental pastime.

One day,Lord Kṛṣṇa along with Lord Balarama and their cowherd friends including Śrīdama, Subala and Toka were grazing their cows and calves in the forests of Vrindavana when some of the friends told the Lord,' O mighty Rama! O Kṛṣṇa, killer of the wicked! The Talavana forest near Govardhana mountain is full of trees loaded with Tala fruits. In that forest lots of Tala fruits are scattered on the ground and lie there unattended as the demon Dhenukasura is guarding them and will not allow anybody to take them. The demon lives in that forest disguised as a Donkey along with his friends who help him in such mis-deeds. They are man-eaters. Human beings, animals and even birds refrain from going anywhere near that forest. Smell the aroma of those fruits in the air! The smell of such ripe fruits in the air has created in our hearts the desire to taste those fruits. You must get us those fruits'.

Rama and Kṛṣṇa laughed at this and along with their friends they entered the forest. Lord Balarama was the first to enter and with his mighty arms he shook one of the trees as if it were being shaken by an elephant. Fruits that were hanging on the branches of the tree began dropping. When he shook one tree, other adjoining trees also shook and fruits began to drop.

When the demon Dhenukasura heard the noise, he came running and hit Lord Baladeva's chest with his hind legs. Then he began running here and there as he was furious and e attacked again. This time Lord Balarama caught his hind legs and started rotating him around in the air. As the speed of rotation increased, the demon lost his breath and died. Balarama then threw the corpse over the trees, resulting in the crashing of more trees, which fell on other trees, leading to the fall of further trees. Maybe this is the reason why we are unable to find any Taal trees in that forest now. When Dhenukasura's relatives heard of his death they

came to take revenge but as they attacked, Balarama and Kṛṣṇa caught them by the hind legs and threw them over the Taal trees. The demigods who were witnessing this wonderful pastime of the Lord were very happy and they showered flowers from heaven.

According to the Vishnu Purana, this pastime occurred after the Lord's pastime with the serpent Kaliya which happened during summer. Hence it was the rainy season which is when the Taal fruits ripen. Śrīla Bhakti Vinode Thakura quotes that Lord Balarama's killing of the demon is actually a message for us since ignorance of the Lord's form, attributes and Name is actually 'dhenukasura'. Therefore we should remove this demon from within our heart by continuous chanting of Lord's name. This is the secret of devotional process.

Kumud-vana: (Kudara-vana)

The devotees travelled from Tala-vana to Kumud-vana by bus but before reaching the place they alighted from the bus so that they could enter Kumud Vana on foot while performing 'sankirtana'. Kudara-vana or Kumud-vana is almost 2 miles to the west of Talavana. The devotees settled near Kṛṣṇa-Kunda in Kumud-vana under the shade of a tree. When the group of devotees circumambulated Braja during the year 1932, they mentioned trees of Kadamba, Neema and Pipala around Kṛṣṇa Kunda. Kṛṣṇa Kunda is also known as Kumud Kunda.

When Brajendra-nandana, Lord Kṛṣṇa was present on earth, this Kṛṣṇa Kunda was full of red-colored lotus flowers. Now there are no flowers at all. The Lord used to have his pastimes in this pond and thus this area was called Kumuda Vana. According to the scriptures this place is also known as 'Jal-asyya – bihaar-sthana'. Śrīla Bhakti Vikas Hrishikesha Maharaj, a disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Gosawami, has glorified this place. He says that when Lord Kṛṣṇa was enjoying his pastimes in the water of the pond, the cowherd damsels of Braja graced the occasion by appearing like red-colored lotus flowers. Local residents call this place Kumud-Kunda or Kṛṣṇa Kunda or Kapildeva darshaniya. Devotees sprinkled the water of this pond over their heads andas per the instructions of Śrīla Bhakti Parmode Puri Maharaj, Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj described the glories of this place in Hindi as well as in Bengali. Śrī Ballabha-acharyya used to sit and meditate at this place. Śrīla

Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami expressed his desire to preserve the memory of this place as Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has visited this place personally, but regrettably so far nothing has been done. The glories of Kumud-vana are described in Bhakti Ratnakara:

dekhah kumudvana parama ascharya etha gati-matre vishnuloke hay pujya

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5/805)

kumud-vana-meyascha tritiya-yavan-mutamama yatra gatva naro devi mama loka mahiyata

(Adi Varaha)

‘O Devi!, this kumud vana is the third important forest. If one visits this place, he at once becomes respectable even at my abode.’

The devotees returned by bus to Śrī Gaudiya Seva-ashrama, Madhuvana, around 2.30 PM. Delicious Kṛṣṇa Prasadam was awaiting them. Everybody was hungry and prasadam tasted like nectar. After honoring the Prasada, devotees retired to their rooms for rest.

Around 4.00 PM the devotees left for Dhruva-Tila, the place where prince Dhruva penanced and acquired transcendence. The devotees again alighted from the bus so as to perform Sankirtana on foot while arriving at Dhruva-Tila. The devotees were pleased to visit such a place.

Dhruva – Tila:

A temple with a courtyard has been built in memory of Prince ‘Dhruva’. The presiding deities of the temple are four-armed Lord Narayana, Śrī Gopala and Śrī Shaligrama. In the western part of the temple, deities of Narada and Dhruva are also worshipped.

On another side there is a deity of Śrī Hanumana. There is one ‘Neem’ tree as well over the mound.

Dhruva was the eldest son of King Uttanapada. When he was 5 years of age, his stepmother conspired that he would not inherit the throne, which hurt him. His mother instructed him in the processes of devotion, and in order to achieve the kingdom of his father, he left his opulence to perform penance. Dhruva meditated on the four handed form of Lord Hari and became ecstatic. As per the Lord’s desire his devotee sage Narada visited the palace of king Uttanapada and later visited Dhruva in the forest. Narada tested Dhruva and when he was convinced of Dhruva’s sincerity to perform penance, Narada initiated him. Following the instructions of sage Narada, Dhruva performed severe penance and was able to have an audience with Lord Narayana. By this time his desire for a material kingdom had completely disappeared. This episode is mentioned in the eighth canto, chapters 8 and 9 of Śrīmad Bhagwatam. One can find details about Dhruva in the book ‘Bhakta – Dhruva’ published by Śrī Chaitanya Gaudiya Math.

Narada’s instruction to Dhruva:

tat tāta gaccha bhadraṁ te yamunāyās taṭaṁ śuci puṇyaṁ madhuvanaṁ yatra sānnidhyaṁ nityadā hareḥ

‘O son, You are blessed. You must go to Madhuvana, on the banks of the Yamuna. Lord Hari stays forever at that place. ‘

The bank where Dhruva used to take bath is famous as Dhruva Ghata. This is

one of the 24 famous bathing places. The glories of Dhruva are mentioned in various scriptures. In Bhaktiratnakara, glories of Dhruva Tirtha are given as,

ai dhruva-tirtha dhruva tapa-syar sthana, dhruva-loka prapti dhruva haya kaila snana tirtha mukhya etha sraddhe pitriloka tare, sarva-tirtha phala paya japadi ye kare

'yatra dhruvena santapta-micch-aya param tapa, tatraiva snana matrena dhruva-loke mahi-ayate dhruva-tirthe tu vasudhe ya sraddharam kurute nara, pitrina santa-vayeta sarvana pitri-pakshe visesata

(adi varaha purana)

The place where Dhruva did penance in order to fulfill his material desire, if one takes dip in the holy water there, he is worshipped in Dhruva Loka. One who offers prayers / oblations in the name of their forefathers at this place particularly during 'Pitri – paksha' (this period of time for fifteen days and it usually falls between September / October, about 10 days before Durga Puja Festival), liberate their forefathers.

gayayaṁ pinḍa-danena yat phalaṁ hi nṛnaṁ bhavet tasmac chata-gunaṁ tīrthe pinḍa-danad dhruvasya ca dhruva-tīrthe japo homas tapo danaṁ surarcanam sarva-tīrthac chata-gunaṁ nṛnaṁ tatra phalaṁ labhet

(Skanda Purana)

The fruits accrued after offering prayers / oblations to your forefathers at Gaya (place in Bihar), increase 100 folds if you offer same prayers / oblations at this place unto your forefathers. Performing of chanting, yajna, penance, prayers, etc. here gives hundred times better result than at any other pious site.

Devotees were pleased to visit this place. After hearing glories of Dhruva, devotees performed Sankirtana and then board the bus. Bust took for Bahulvana. Bus drove till metallic road and stopped. Devotees got down and entered Bahulvana while engaging themselves in Sankirtana. Bahulvana is famous as ‘Vati’ or ‘Bathi’ Devotees passed through Bati village before reaching Bahula Kunda. Bahula Kunda is situated at the northern end of village Bati and in the south of this village is a site of cow Bahula. The temple of Bahula cow is presided over by the engraved pictures of leopard, Goverdhana – dhari Kṛṣṇa, Narada, Bahula Cow, its calf, and a brahaman. These pictures are engraved on stone. As per Brajmandala Parikrama epic,

Once a cow called bahula used to live at this place. A leopard attacked the cow. At once Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared and rescued cow from the clutches of leopard by killing the leopard. Some say, a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa who used to live at Vrindavana and he had a cow. While grazing cow entered Bahulavana. Bhaulavana was a very dense forest at that time. In that forest, leopard attacked the cow. Cow requested leopard that as she is going to feed he calf thus he should wait till she finish feeding. Then cow went to her calf and told he that he can drink as much milk as he desires as this is going to be his last feed. The cow has to return to leopard and fulfill her commitment. To this calf replied that he would not feed himself till he saves his mother’s life. Brahmana was listening all this. He took both of them to leopard. Leopard quipped that he seeks only one for eating but now threesome has come, what’s going on? To this brahmana and calf replied that if leopard will eat cow then these two would also die. Lord Kṛṣṇa being omnipresent sends Narada to rescue his devotee. Narada judges the situation and returned. He asked Kṛṣṇa to go there and save the situation. Thus we have engraved pictures of all these in that temple and this forest are named ‘Bahulavana’ after the name of cow ‘bahula’.

It is mentioned in an encyclopedia (‘Vishwa-kosha’), once lived a pious and milky cow’ bahula, at this place. Once a leopard attacked her but she begged for some time from leopard. She then went home and fed her calf. After feeding she returned. Leopard was none other than Kṛṣṇa who came to test the cow. Most merciful Lord Hari then revealed his four handed form to the cow. This place near the Kṛṣṇa Kunda is a memoir of such incident. Some call bahula kiunda as Kṛṣṇa kunda. Śrīla Ballabhacharya used to sit and meditate on the banks of this kunda. Next to temple of bahula cow, is the temple of Śrīa Radha Kṛṣṇa or Śrī

Bihari. It is in the southern direction from the kunda. On the northern direction from the kunda is situated an old temple of Śrī Murli-Manohara. Śrīla Bhakti Siddhanta Thakura has sung the glories of Bahula Kunda as under:

Radha Kunda is considered amidst Bahula Kunda. We must chant Kṛṣṇa's name and remember the glories of this kunda. If we visit any holy place without paying attention to its glories, it would be fruitless. We must develop lust for Kṛṣṇa and that will develop only be hearing about Kṛṣṇa. We must remember that all places of Braja are memoirs of transcendental pastimes of conjugal love between Radha and Kṛṣṇa, this thought will make us eligible to visit any holy site in Braja. Bhakti Ratnakara narrates the visit of Lord Chaitanya to this place and how he transformed all the animal of this place into devotees so that they can taste the transcendental mellow of devotion.

raghava pandita kahe haia ullas, śrī bahulvana ei-dekha śrī nivasa. śrī krsna caitanya vana bhraman kale, prema-vese mata haia aila ai pathe. lakha lakha gabhi gana udharva-puche dhaya, caturdike bedi gaur candra pane caya.

śrī gausunder haste sparsi gabhi-gane, prakasaye purve yaiche kaila gocarne. mrigadika pasu, sikhi kokiladi paksa, mahamata caturdike phire laksha laksha. vriksa-gana puspa-vristi kare gaurcandre, dekhaye asankhaye loka parama anande.

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5/452 –57)

bahula śri-hareḥ patnī tatra tiṣṭhati sarvada tasmin padmavane rajan bahu-punya-phalani ca tatraiva ramate viṣnur lakṣmya sardhaṁ sadaiva hi tatra saṅkarṣaṇaṁ kuṇḍam tatra mana-saro nṛpa yas tatra kurute snanaṁ madhu-mase nṛpottama sa paśyati hariṁ tatra lakṣmya saha viśampate

(Skanda Purana)

The wife of Śrī Hari, Bahula resides in bahul – vana. O King! One who visits this forest next to pond of Bahula, gains pious benefits. The reason is Lord Vishnu resides there with his consort lakshmi. Hey Nripa! There is a Sankarsana Kunda and Mansara at Bahul- vana. Hey Narpate! He best among nripa! One who take dip during the month of Chaitra (between February – March) in that Kunda, is able to get an audience with Lord Vishnu and Lakshmi.

There is another auspicious place at Bahul-vana and that is 'Mayura– village'. Radha-Kṛṣṇa danced amidst millions of dancing peacocks and peahens. The priest and his assistant Śrī Madhusudana Dasa Sharma, of temple of Ballabhacharya (situated at Bahulavana) is a disciple of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaj. They were very pleased to receive the devotees and they greeted them. They even presented new cloths to the present president acharya and Śrīla Puri Maharaj.

After that all devotees came back to Bhawani guest house, Mathurā by bus, around 8.00 PM.

Circumambulating Śrī dhama Mathurā:

On 7th October, Tuesday lot of devotees from Dehradun came to join us. On 8th October, a huge sankirtana procession was taken out at 8.00 am and the process visited the temples of Śrīnathji Ji, Shatrughana, Padmanabha, Dirghavishnu, bhuteshwar mahadeva, yogmaya, potrkunda, etc. and returned by afternoon around 2.00 PM. As it took lot of time to distribute and honor Kṛṣṇa prasadam, devotees did not go out during evening.

Śrī Nathji:

The deity of Śrī Goverdhana–dhari Gopala later became popular as Śrīnathjiji. Śrīla Madhvendra Puripada served this deity. A brief history about this is narrated in Śrī Gaudiya Vasihnava Abhidhana. There is a place Śrīnathji-dvara, about 11 korsa (1korsa = 3 kms) towards northeast of Udyapura, on the right hand banks of river Banas. When Aurangzeb was destroying the temples of Mathurā, then Rana Raj Singh of Udaipur planned to transfer this deity to Uadipur. On the way when the procession was moving amidst the sounds of trumpets, the wheel of the chariot on which this deity was riding stuck in the mud. People tried to get the wheel moving but all was in vain. Rana understood that Śrī Gopala want to stay here, so he erected a beautiful temple and established the deity right on that spot. People of that area called Gopala as Śrīnathjia, thus the latter name became popular. Though the devotees of Gaudiya cult served deity but the deity became famous as serviced by Vallabhacharya cult. When one visits Śrīdhama Jagannath Puri, one can purchase and taste the transcendental prasadam of His Lord ship Jagannath from 'Ananda Bazaar' (Anand Market). Similarly one can purchase and taste the prasad of Śrīnathji ji at Nathdvara. Like Jagannath Ji, Śrīnathji Ji is not offered Rice. Śrīnathji ji is offered lot of various sweets. Lord Chaitanya is Kṛṣṇa himself. He did not climb Śrī Goverdhana hill in order to have audience with Śrī Gopala. Śrī Gopala arranged to spread fear of Muslims, so that priests brought the deity down to village Gatholi. Lord Chaitanya then had an audience with the deity at Gatholi. Śrīla Rupa Goswami and Śrīla Sanatana Goswami did not climb Goverdhana Hill as well in order to follow the doctrine led by Lord Chaitanya. Śrī Gopala being merciful came to Gatholi to let them have audience as well.

When Śrīla Rupa Goswami grew old, he could not go to Goverdhana. Then all merciful Gopala arranged the fear of Muslim soldiers again and came to Mathurā. Śrīla Rupa Goswami had a fortune to have His audience there. Śrī Gopala resided for one month at the house of Śrī Vitthaleshwara. He was youngest between the two sons of Śrī Ballabh Bhatt.

vṛddha-kāle rūpa-gosāñi nā pāre yāite vāñchā haila gopālera saundarya dekhite mleccha-bhaye āilā gopāla mathurā-nagare eka-māsa rahila viṭhṭhaleśvara-ghare tabe rūpa gosāñi saba nija-gaṇa lañā eka-māsa daraśana kailā mathurāya rahiyā

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 18/46-48)

Temple of Satrughana:

Demon Madhu had a son Lavnasura. When his atrocities increased manifold then saints went Lord Rama for rescue, and Lord sent Satrughana to perform the duty. Satrughana killed that demon and re-established Mathurā and made it his capitol (this had been mentioned earlier on page no. 13) In adi purana it is narrated about adi varaha. As per that sage Viprasi used to worship deity of Lord Varaha. Demigod Indra took this deity from the sage and eventually deity landed in the hands of Ravana. After killing Ravana Lord Rama brought deity to Ayodhya. After killing demon, Lavnasura, Satrughana brought the deity from Ayodhya and established at Mathurā (this had been mentioned earlier on page number 21). King Dasratha and Lady Sumitra were parents of Satrughana who was part of Lord Rama.

When Rama was on exile at that time satrughana has followed and stayed with Bharata at Nandigrama. Satrughana bencame famous after he killed demon Lavana, since then his idol is worshipped in Mathurā.

Temple of Padmanabha:

The second four expansions of Narayana are Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumana, and Aniruddha. Each has further three expansions. Amongst three expansions of Aniruddha, one is Padmanabha. All expansions of Narayana are similar but they differ on the basis of weapons they exhibit. Padmanabha carries, conch, lotus, disc and club. Brahma appeared from a lotus flower, and this flower emerged from the navel of Vishnu, thus Vishnu is also known as Padmanabha. One must remember the glories of Padmanabha before going to bed.

osadhe cintaye-dvisnum bhojane ca janaradna sayane padmanabhanch vivahe ca prajapatim

(Vrihatraandikeshvara Purana)

Dirgha Viishnu Temple:

In the book 'Śrī Vraja-mandalaa Parikrama' compiled on the basis of circumambulation of Braja Mandala, during the year 1932 under the auspices of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, it is stated: Lord Kṛṣṇa expanded (increased) his size in order to wrestle with Kamsa's wrestlers, Canura and Mustika. The same form of Kṛṣṇa is famous as Dirgha Vishnu. When Lord Chaitanya visited Vrindavana, He visited this temple (CC Madhya 17/191). This temple is situated on the way to Bharatpur Darwaza (Door), in the colony of Manoharpura of Mathurā City. The king of Kashi, King Patlimala, built the present temple. One has to climb several stairs in order to reach the temple. The circumambulation path is made of concrete. All devotees rested there for a while and chanted the glories of this place. After that one of local resident quoted that Kṛṣṇa increased his size in order to pull Kamsa by his hairs and eventually killed him, thus Kṛṣṇa is also known as Dirgha- Vishnu. Bhaktiratnakara glorifies the place as under: One who is able to have audience with DirghaVishnu or Padmanabha in Mathurā, his all desires is fulfilled.

dekha dekha ki ascarya mathurā nagre srībhagwanera murti sada sobha kare dirghvishnu, padmanabha, syayambhuva nama ye dekhe sakrita tara pure sarvakama drighvishnum smalokya padmanabham sveyambhuvam mathurāyam sakrid-dev sarvabhista-amvapnuyata

(Adi Varaha)

Bhuteshwara Mahadeva:

Lord Siva protects Śrīdhama Mathurā in all the four directions. One who is guarding the Dhama in west is known as Śrī Bhuteshwara Mahadeva. Earlier we have explained the glories of Lord Siva, a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

kṣetra-palo maha-devo vartate yatra sarvada yatra viśranti-tīrthaṁ ca tatra kiṁ durlabhaṁ phalam tri-varga-da kaminaṁ ya mumukṣunaṁ ca mokṣada bhaktīcchor bhaktida kas taṁ Mathurāṁ naśrayed budhaḥ

(Skanda Purāṇa, Mathurā-khaṇḍa)

Once can achieve all desires at a place called Mathurā, where a pious place Like Vishrama Ghata is situated and whose care takes is Lord Shiva. This Mathurā fulfils the desire of materialistic as well as devotees. Thus intelligent people must take shelter in Mathurā.

ei mahadeva bhuteshvara kshetrapala drishti matra hare papa parama dyala kṛṣṇa bhakti labhe kaile ihar pujana ihate ye virupa-tahara vidambana

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5 / 224-225)

mathurāyaṁ ca deva tvaṁ kṣetra-palo bhaviṣyasi tvayi dṛṣṭe maha-deva mama kṣetra-phalaṁ labhet

(Adi- Varaha)

Hey Deva! You will be the caretaker of Mathurā. Hey Mahadeva! One must get your audience before he reaps the benefit of visiting my place.

yatra bhuteshvro deva mokshda papinamapi mama priyatamo nityam devo bhuteshvara para katham va mayi bhaktim sa labhate papa purusa yo madiyam param bhaktam sivam sampujyeanhhi manmayamohi-atdhiya prayaste manvadhama bhuteshvaram ye smaranti na namanti stuvanti va

(Adi Varaha purana nidhana khanda & Padam Purana Patala khanda)

In that Śrīdhama Mathurā, Bhutnatha Mahadeva lives who delivers the sinners. He is most dear to me. One who does not offer obeisances to my devotees Siva; he does not get my devotion. One who lives under illusion does not offer respects, prayers to Lord Bhootnatha.

Bhuta:

They are followers of Lord Siva. Since Lord Siva is Lord of all sorts of ghosts, he is known as Bhotesvara. Lord Chaitanya executed a pastime of having an audience with Bhuteshwara. Since crowds gather in large number for his audience, there is a proper railway stating at this place, which is arranged by the government.

Patala Devi (Yoga maya):

Near to the temple of Buteshwara is a den, where the deity of Patala Devi resides. Some name her as Patala Vasini or Pataleshwari. In Ramayana one finds a pastime where Mahiravana, son of Ravana tricked Hanumana under the disguise of Vibhishana and kidnapped Rama and Lakshmana. He took them to

Patalapura. Later Hanumana reached there and killed him. Residents of Baraja claim this den to be the same place. Lord Bhuteshwara is caretaker of Mathurā and elevated devotee of Lord. They do not consider him independent God. Pure devotees of Lord pray to the Yogmaya considering her to be potency of Lord not an independent deity. Śrīla Bhakti Vinode Thakura narrates in his poetry 'Kalyana Kalpatru' as:

āmāra samāna hīna nāhi e saṁsāre asthira hayechi paṛi bhava-pārāvāre kula-devī yogamāyā more kṛpā kari āvaraṇa saṁvaribe kae viśvodarī śunechi āgame vede mahimā tomāra śrī-kṛṣṇa-vimukhe bāṅdhi karāo saṁsāra śrī-kṛṣṇa sammukhya jāra bhāgya-krame haya tāṅre mukti diyā kara aśoka abhaya e dāse janani kari akaitava dayā vṛndāvane deha sthāna tumi yogamāyā tomāke laṅghiyā kothā jīve kṛṣṇa pāya kṛṣṇa rāsa prakaṭila tomāra kṛpāya tumi kṛṣṇa-sahacarī jagata-jananī tumi dekhāile more kṛṣṇa-cintāmaṇi niṣkapaṭa haye mātā cāo mora pane vaiṣṇave viśvāsa vṛddhi hauk pratikṣaṇe vaiṣṇava-caraṇa vinā bhava-pārāvāra bhaktivinoda nāre haibāre pāra

In the tenth canto of Śrīmad Bhagwatam, it is mentioned that cowherd damsels of Braja offered prayers to Yogmaya Katyayani in order to secure Lord Kṛṣṇa as their husband. Devotees pray to Yogmaya with the same desire.

kātyāyani mahā-māye mahā-yoginy adhīśvari nanda-gopa-sutaṁ devi patiṁ me kuru te namaḥ iti mantraṁ japantyas tāḥ pūjāṁ cakruḥ kamārikāḥ

(SB. 10/22/4)

Cowherd damsels offered prayers to Yogamaya with aforesaid mantra. The mantra means, Hey Yogmaya! Mahayogini, adhisvari katyayani Devi, we offer you our respects, kindly make us wives of Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda.

Śrīla Vishwanatha Chakravarti in his explanation of Narada Pancaratra says,

Damsels of braja offered following prayers to Yogamaya in order to get Kṛṣṇa as their husband.

bhaktimana jana haite premnishtha srestha premnistha haite gopi srīharir preshtha

This yogmaya distributes love of Kṛṣṇa to his devotees and lures non-devotees of world into illusion and threefold misery.

Potrakunda (Putra-kunda):

This is situated near the appearance place of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lady Devaki washed her clothes next day here, after the birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Residents of Braja claim that name signifies 'putra-da-kunda' illustrating that kamsa threw the bodies of six sons of Vasudeva here, after killing them.

One has to cross many obstacles and stages in order to taste the transcendence of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Though these pastimes look material but the all are transcendental. One must clearly understand this point of view.

Adi Keśava Temple & Place of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance:

In the Vraja-mandalaa circumambulation scripture which was written during 1932, it is written that Mathurā is in the shape of Lotus flower and exactly in the heart / center of the lotus in situated the appearance place of Lord Kṛṣṇa and at that place is the temple of Adi-Keśava. The deity of Keśava is holding lotus,

conch, disc and club. Lowe right hand is holding lotus and upper right hand is holding conch. Lower left-hand is holding club and upper left hand is holding disc. On the right hand side of Śrī Kehsava is Śrīmati Lakshmi and on the left is Śrīmati Saraswati. Lord Chaitanya exhibited the pastime taking dip in Yamuna at Vishrama Ghata and then He went to have audience with His Lordship Keśava Ji. Śrīla Prabhupada followed same ritual and tradition by bathing the deity of Lord Chaitanya in Yamuna and then entering the temple complex.

Lord takes numerous incarnations but six are the main: Yugavatara, Lilavatara, Manvantravatara, purusavatara, gunavatara and Saktyavesavtara. Another incarnation, which is most merciful, is archavatara. In Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya lila, it is mentioned that Lord Chaitanya told Śrīla Sanatana Goswami about the 24 arcavatara, namely Śrī Jagannath in Neelacala, Śrī Madhava in Prayaga, Śrī Madhusudana in Mandara, Śrī Vardraja in Visnukanci, Śrī Hari in Mayapura, Śrī Vasudeva, Śrī Janardana and Śrī Padmanabha in Anandaranya and Śrī Keśava in Mathurā. These manifestations of Lord appear and look after the welfare of people. As Śrī Keśava is residing in the Lotus shaped Mathurā, on the eastern petal Śrī Vishranti deva ji is residing, on the western petal, Śrī Hardevaji (in goverdhana) is residing, on northern petal Śrī Govind Dev is residing and on the southern petal Śrī Varaha Dev ji is residing.

tatrapi vaisistaya-srī mathurā padmakriti klesaghana keshavadever karnikaya sthiti

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5/139)

idam padam mahabhage sarvesam muktidayakam

karnikayam sthitodeva kesava klesanasan karnikayam mrita ye te nra muktibhagina

patramadhye mrita ye tesam muktir-vasundhare

(adi varaha 163 / 15)

O Magananimous Vasundhare! This lotus or lotus shaped Mathurā liberates everybody. In the middle / heart Lord Keśava presides. One, who dies here, is liberated at once. Lord Keśava stays in Mathurā forever.

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitamrita   Madhya Lila – 20)

The temple of Lord Keśava, situated at the appearance place of Lord Kṛṣṇa, was built with enormous investment of wealth. Aurangzeb destroyed everything thus we are unable to see the original opulent structure. Only inner portion is remaining and adjoining to that a mosque had been erected. Adjoining to the wall of mosque, a new temple was built which is now known as Adi- keshava temple. The presiding deity of the temple is fourhanded form of Lord Keśava, Lord Saligrama and Lord Gopala. Lot of construction took place this year and lot more is expected.

Appearance place of Lord Kṛṣṇa: Such places are transcendental and we shall not try to visualize absolute with our limited senses.

Śrī Radha Kunda and Syama Kunda: Transcendental object is beyond the sense of material senses. Ravana was not able to touch Sita at all. He was not able to have even audience with her. One must not think that appearance place of Lord Kṛṣṇa had been taken over by the cruel non-Hindu king and mosque. The appearance place of Lord Kṛṣṇa, or Lord Rama or Lord Caitanya is all-absolute and they are part of transcendental realm of Lord. They cannot be taken over by the material power and desires. Current scenarios are simply a test by Lord to check the purity and dedication of devotees. (From Braja-Mandala Parikrama, year 1932)

The appearance place and temple of Lord Keśava are situated in a colony called ‘mallapura’. People say that when Devaki and Vasudeva were in the prison,

kamsa had deputed his wrestlers (malla) to protect the place. Now this place is known as Idgah. A beautiful and large temple comes up at this place to commemorate the appearance place of Lord Kṛṣṇa. There is another hall exhibiting pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and various other departments. After visiting this place all devotees returned to Bhawani guesthouse at 1.30 PM. Honoring of Prasadam took its own time, plus devotees were tired so no program was organized during the evening. However many devotees went of their own to have an audience and look at various temples and aarti (offering of lamps). During evening after the aarti and circumambulation of Tulsi Devi, His Holiness Śrīla Puri Maharaj gave sermons on 'Gajendra Moksha' (deliverance of an Elephant), followed by the lecture by President Acharya. Later sankirtana was held.

22 aswani 1391, 9 October 1984, Tuesday:

While circumambulating city of Mathurā, on the 4th day, devotees went to Chaubisa Ghata, Druva Tila, Saptrisi tila, Śrīkeshavji Gaudiya Math, Gokaneshvara Mahadeva, Ambrisha Tila, etc. and returned by 1.00 PM.

Chaubis Ghata:

Earlier while narrating glories of Visrama Ghata and Visranti Ghata, we have mentioned this place.

ahe srīnivasa! ei ardhacandra-sthiti srīyamuna tirtha catu-virsati vidati ei avimukti tirtha snane mukti haya prana-tyage visnuloka – prapti suniscaya

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5/248 – 249)

avimukte nara snato muktim prapnotyas-amsayam tatrath munchate pranan

mama lokam sa gacchati

(adi varaha)

One who takes a dip at avimukta tirtha is liberated at once. Similarly one who dies at this place comes to my abode.

On the basis of Bhaktiratnakara and adi varaha purana, one who takes a dip at guhya tirtha achieves abode of Vishnu, one gets opulence after taking dip at Kankhala, and one achieves abode of Vishnu if he takes a dip at Tinduka Tirtha. A dip at Surya's place fetches you benefit of one Rajsurya Yajna, dip at Dhruva Loka gives you a shelter at Dhruva Loka, a dip at rishi tirtha gives you a permanent place in Vishnu loka, dip at moksa tirtha liberates you, you get Visnu loka if you take a dip at Koti tirtha or sayamana tirtha, or Mahesvara and pranatyaga. If you pray for the welfare of your ancestors at Bodhi tirtha then you get a place at Pitri loka, dip at dharapatan takes away your sorrow, you will get heaven by taking a dip at Nagtirtha and will be liberated if you die there. You will go to Sun planet (Surya Loka) by taking at dip at ghantabharana tirtha. One goes to Soma loka (moon) by taking dip at Soma Tirtha, You will be liberated of the sin of killing a Brahmin of you take a dip at Cakratirtha. If you take a dip at Dasasavmedha tirtha then you get a place in heaven, and if you take a dip at vignaraja tirtha your all miseries and sins would be washed away. The fruits attained by taking dip at visranti, shoukar, naimis-prayaga, puskar and pancatirtha, increases tenfold if you take a dip at Kṛṣṇa- Ganga. If you take a dip at Vaikuntha Ganga, you are liberated off your sins and you attain abode of Vishnu. You get the fruits of circumambulating earth, if you take a dip at Asi-kunda. As per Saour Purana, if you take a dip at Parayaga tirtha then you get fruits of agniastoma yajna, if you take a dip at vata- sawami tirtha, you won't suffer from diseases and you will get all opulence + you will be liberated after death. If you offer prayers to your ancestors at Dhruva tirtha you are benefited hundred times. If you take a dip at Gokarna Mahadeva tirtha you attain affection of Lord Visnu.

Dhruva Tila:

There is a temple of Dhruva on this hill and near to this temple there is a temple of atala-Gopala. Dhruva bathed at this bank of Yamuna and took initiation from sage Narada. He then meditated upon Visnu in order to fulfill his desire and attained Vishnu. This is the most pious place.

dhruva tirthamiti khyatam tirtha mukhyam tata parama yatra snana krito mokso dhruva eva na samsaya

(soura purana)

Now this is another important place Dhruva tirtha. One is liberated if he takes a dip here.

Saptrisi Tila:

At Risi-tirtha tila is saptrisi hill. The saptarisi are seven sages, son of Brahma, namely Marici, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulah, Kratu and Vasistha.

Ambrisa Tila:

If you climb 70 feet above Cakra tirtha, you will reach Ambrisha Tila or hill. It is popular that at this place Lord Visnu directed his weapon disc ‘Sudarsana’ to follow Durvasa or attack him, thereby glorifying his devotee Ambrisa. King Ambrisa wanted to meditate upon Kṛṣṇa. He came to Mathurā and offered severe

penance for one year. On the next day of last ekadasi of month of kartika, Ambrisa offered prayers to Lord Hari and served devotees and Brahmins. After this when he was going to break his fast, sage Durvasa approached him as a guest. King Ambrisa welcomes him and offered him prasadam. Durvasa was pleased by the gesture of king and agreed. He told him he would honor the prasadam after completing daily ritual of some prayers of his. Thus Durvasa went to Yamuna and sat there in trance. Here the time to break- fast was running out. Ambrisa was worried as he knew that if fast is not broken at proper time, then the fast will be useless. And if he breaks his fat and eat food without serving Durvasa, it will be sin. Thus Ambrisa consulted few brahmana. Then it was decided that fast could be broken by drinking water. Eventually king broke his fast by consuming some water. There Durvasa came to know about this due to his elevated state. This annoyed him and he sent his servitor Krytya to kill Ambrisa but Lord Hari sent his disc ‘sudarsana’ at once and the disc killed krytya. This is mentioned in detail in ninth canto of Śrīmad Bhagwatam.

Akrura Temple:

Śrī Akroor was born in Vrisnai dynasty and he is a pious person. His mother was Gandhini and father was Safalka. He was like a father to Lord Kṛṣṇa. He was brought up in the palace of Kamsa. Kamsa had faith in him so Kamsa sent him to bring Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Balrama from Braja on a chariot.

Kubja Kupa:

In the North-west direction of Katara, there is a well. This is known as well of Kubja. Near Kamsa hill, is Kubja hill or temple of Kubja. Kubja used to live at this place. The temple is freshly built in order to commemorate the place. The presiding deity if of Kubja.

srīkubjara mandira acchila eikhane ei dekha kubja kupa-sarva loka jane kubja saha krishnera ye adbhuta vilasa taha trijagata – majhe haila prakasa

(bhakti ratnakara 5/368 – 369)

Lord Kṛṣṇa blessed Kubja by converting her into a beautiful damsel. In Śrīmad Bhagwatam it is written: Kubja was maid of Kamsa. She used to prepare and apply various perfumes, thus she was adored by kamsa. One day when Krsna along with Baldeva was coming out of house of Sudama, Kubja met them. At that time she was taking the fragrances to Kamsa. On addressing, Kubja introduced herself as 'Trivakra' or servant of Kamsa to them. Kṛṣṇa requested Kubja for fragrances and asked her to apply them on him. Kubja was enchanted by the beauty and melodious voice of Krsna and Balrama, thus she dressed them with her ointments and fragrances. Serving lord always reap benefits. Krsna thought of helping Kubja and then he pressed her feet by his feet and lifted her chin by his hand. By the touch of Lord Mukunda Kubja was able to stand straight and she was converted to a beautiful damsel. Kubja was mesmerized and was floating in love for Kṛṣṇa so she began pulling his clothes in orders to take him home. Krsna was shy in presence of Balrama and told Kubja that we have to go somewhere and when we will return then I will fulfill your wish.

Rangeshwara Mahadeva:

In the four directions of Mathurā, four caretakers exist. In the east is Piplesavara, in the west is Bhutesavara, in the north is Gokanesvara and in the south is Rangesvara Mahadeva. These four caretakers are dear to Lord. In the beginning we have mentioned the glories to Lord Siva. Kamsa had invited Krsna and Balrama through Akroora at his bow-yajna (dhanuryajna) and when Krsna and Balrama had broken the bow of Indra and killed the soldiers of Kamsa. Kamsa was scared. He was able to see the astronomical situation of planets. However next day it was the game of wrestling that began. All the city and village folk gathered to see the games. Sirens begin to blow and wrestlers started exploiting their bodies. Rama and Kṛṣṇa on hearing trumpets started for this place. On the

way and enormous elephant ‘Kuvalyapida’ blocked the passage. Rama and Kṛṣṇa asked him to get aside and even threatened the elephant. This enraged the owner of the elephant and he directed his elephant towards Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa fought with elephant and eventually pulled his teeth and killed the elephant and other elephants. Krsna and Balarama entered the sports complex with the teeth of elephant on their shoulders. Everybody was able to see Krsna as per his or her feelings about him. The deity of Lord Siva, which was worshipped here, is known as Rangesvara Mahadeva.

Kamsa Tila:

Residents of Braja are expert in wrestling. In order to please Kamsa, Canura challenged Krsna into wrestling. Śrī Krsna wrestled with Canura and Lord Balarama had a wrestling match with Mustika. Kamsa on platform, Vasudeva, Nanda Maharaj, Ugrasena and other Gopas were watching this wrestling. Śrī Krsna caught hold of the wrestler and he rotated him around for a while and then threw him. Canura hit the earth with great force and died. Mustika was not able to tolerate the hit of Lord Balarama and he vomited blood. Eventually he also died. This enraged Kamsa and he tortured Nanda Maharaj and Vasudeva and asked Krsna, Balarama to leave the place. Krsna then caught hold of Kamsa and began pulling from his hairs. He brought kamsa in the center of court and sat on him with bump. This killed Kamsa. The same place is now known as Kamsa Tila or Kamsa-khali. This place is near ‘Holi gate’. The presiding deity of this temple are Krsna and Balrama and Krsna is shown pulling Kamsa by his hairs. There is a drain ‘Kamsa-khera’ near this place, which is going to Yamuna. The priest of Mathurā say when Kamsa body was pulled towards Yamuna, this drain was formed.

Śrī Keśava Ji Gaudiya Math:

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Pargyana Kesava Goswami Maharaj was among

the affectionate disciples of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada. Devotees climbed to second story while chanting in order to have an audience with His Lordship Śrī Śrī Guru – Gauranga – Radha – Krsna. Devotee's perfomed Sankirtana there. There is hall as well adjacent to the temple. Devotees rested there for a while and then moved ahead.

Gokaresvara Mahadeva:

The caretaker (Lord Siva) residing in the northern direction of Mathurā is Śrī Gokarneshvara. This place is situated at the outskirts of city. It took a while for devotees to reach there. After having an audience with Lord Siva, devotees sat down on an uneven piece of land outside the temple. Śrīla Puri Maharaj and Śrīla Acharya Deva narrated the glories of Gokarnesvara in Bengali and Hindi respectively. It is mentioned in 196th chapter of 5th episode of Padama Purana written by Śrīla Vyasdeva, when Sage Narada wanted to hear about glories of Śrīmad Bhagwatam (it gives liberation to even wicked souls), then Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatana and Stankumara explained it as under:

Once upon a time, at a place called Kohala on the banks of Tungbhadra, there lived a rich pious man Atam-deva. His wife was Dhundhuli who was beautiful and expert in home affairs but she was selfish, cruel and wicked. The man was not blessed with a son though he was more than 80 years old. He was sad and he left all his opulence and went to forest. On the way he felt hungry as well as thirsty. He drank water from a nearby pond and sat under a tree to rest. Meanwhile and elevated sage also came there. That sage drank water from the pond and sat down for rest. The man offered his obeisance's to the sage and explained him his misery. The sage told him that he wouldn't have son for seven lives. Thus he should not try for the same. But the man was not satisfied and he kept on requesting the sage for rescue. Then the sage gave him a fruit and told him that when his wife will eat this fruit, she will give birth to a son. Atmadeva was very happy and he immediately started for his house. He asked his wife to eat the fruit. Wife was scared of pregnancy and probable death so she consulted her younger sister who had come to meet her. After consultation she took the

fruit from her husband and then fed that fruit to their cow. Dhundhuli's younger sister was pregnant. Her sister was poor, so her sister requested her to adopt her expected son and keep this as secret. At proper time, son was born and dhundhuli reflected that she gave the birth to a son. Atma-deva was a simple man, he was convinced with his wife and he gave lot of money in charity. After three month the cow of the house gave birth to a calf that was human but ears were like a cow. Thus Atmadeva kept the name of calf as Gokarana. Gokarna was a devotee since childhood and son of dhundhuli was turning out to be notorious. As he grew he indulged himself in intoxication and illicit sex. He wasted his father's money in such affairs. Atma-deva protested but his son used to abuse him and even beat him. This devastated Atamdeva and he left his household in consultation with gokarna. His departure became boon for dhundhuli's son and he began bringing prostitutes to his house. His mother disagreed and was annoyed. He wanted to kill his mother for this. Mother was devastated with this and she committed suicide. Once father's money was over, he became a thief and dacoit in order to satisfy his lust and please prostitutes. Eventually prostitutes came to know about the poverty of dundhulis' son. Thus they killed him and buried him. This was the result of his mis-deeds. Wife of Atmadeva dhundhuli became ghost and their son dhundhukari became even bigger ghost. He could not eat in spite of hunger and he could not drink though he was thirsty. His body was composed of air and he felt severe heat and cold during seasons. Gokarana went to Gaya to offer prayers and articles in memory of his mother. Then he came and acknowledged that their house was vacant now. At night he saw various identities, like snake, camel, fire, etc. all trying to scare him away. Gokarana thought that somebody wicked is doing all this. He used his mystic powers and talked to that ghost who turned out his brother dhundhukari. Dhundhukari cried a lot and pleaded his brother for rescue. Dhundhukari was not liberated though Gokarna has offered prayers at Gaya. Gokarana then pleased Lord Sun with his meditation and asked him the method to liberate Dhnudhukari. Sun told him that only remedy is to organize the recitation week of Śrīmad Bhagwatam. Gokarana did as was told. Eventually Dhundhukari was liberated. The meaning of Gokaranesvara is linga of Siva at Gokaran tirtha. The presiding deity of Lord Siva at Gokarna Tirtha is Gokarnesvara Mahadeva.

ei visvanatha tirtha gokarnakhya nama visnu priya bhuvane vidita anupama

(Bhakti Ratnakara – 5/320)

tato gokarṇa-tīrthakhyaṁ tīrthaṁ tri-bhuvana-śrutam vidyate viśvanathasya viṣṇor atyanta-vallabham

(Sour Purana)

This means that here is the place of Lord Mahadeva who is most dear to Lord Visnu, popular as Gokarana Tirtha.

Rajaka Ghata:

Here the washer man of Kamsa used to wash his clothes. When Lord Krsna and Balarama came with Akroora on his chariot to Mathurā then first met Maharaj Nanda and other cowherd men. Akroora invited them to his place. Krsna told him that he would come after getting rid of Kamsa. Then Akroora went to inform Kamsa that Lord Krsna and Lord Balrama has arrived. When Krsna along with Balrama and other cowherd friends went to have a look at the city of Mathurā lot of girls and damsels of Mathurā had a distant audience with them from the terrace and out doors. They were excited and charmed. They showered flowers, etc. on Krsna and his friends. Brahmana offered curd, rice, incense stocks, flowers, etc. and prayed unto the lotus feet of Lord. When Krsna saw the washer man of Kamsa, he requested him to give him some clothes. Washer man was unable to recognize the Lord, thus he abused and denied the clothes to him. This annoyed Krsna, thus he slapped the washer man due to which he was be-headed.

This pastime of Krsna is a lesson for the people who work for furtive benefits. People who have no faith in Krsna keep on pinpointing good and bad about Krsna resulting in bad Karma for them. Lord is omnipotent and he can act as per His own will. People who do not understand that whatever Krsna does is good for his potency as well as the expansions of potency i.e. living souls, they know

nothing. Kamsa, his washer man, clothes all belong to Krsna. He is the sole owner of everything. By killing washer man he expressed his grace and gave him His mercy as washer man was immediately liberated. 'Hatarisugatidayakatva', means lord liberates demons by killing them. One cannot understand this concept without the mercy of Lord and His devotees.

Cakratirtha:

This had been explained earlier in 24 tirtha.

cakratirtha vikhyata dekhah srīniwasa etha snana karye trirata upvasa snana matre manusayera brahma-hatya yaya kahite ki-parama durlabha phala paya

Manikarnika Ghata:

This had been explained earlier in 24 tirtha. This is situated towards North of Visrama Ghata.

Kamsalya:

After visiting Manikarnika Ghata, devotees climbed number of stairs to reach over the top of a hill. To commemorate the happening of history, this place had been built. You can see the city of Mathurā from top.

Kamsevara Mahadeva Bhairavi:

Over the top of Kamlsaye there is a temple and presiding deities are Kamsevara Mahadeva and His Potency Bhairavi. These were the deities, which were prayed by Kamsa. The temples do not look old. The devotes joined and began congregational chating and came down. They reached place of stay, Bhawani guesthouse at 1.00 PM. They honored Prasadam and took rest. The regular programs of evening aarti, circumambulation basil planet, lectures, etc. were held as per schedule.

2 Camp - Sri Govardhana

(10th October, Wednesday to 12th October, Friday)

The devotees gathered their luggage and departed from Bhawani guesthouse at 9.00 AM by four reserved buses. Although they were supposed to depart at 7.00 AM one bus arrived late. Sri Paresanubhava brahmchari and Sri Premayam brahmchari, along with ten or twelve other devotees, boarded a small truck and went in advance to prepare food for everyone. On the way, all the devotees were afforded the opportunity of seeing the auspicious sights of Santanu Kunda (pond). Stopping at the end of a metallic road, the devotees disembarked from the buses and began the congregational chanting of the Lord’s Holy Names. This place is situated almost three miles away from Maholi. Everyone sprinkled the water of the kunda on his or her head and then climbed the hill’s stairway to have audience with the presiding deity of the temple there, Santanu Bihari ji. This deity is carved from black stone and to the left of the deity is Srimati Rādhā, carved from white stone. Other deities present there are: Laddu Gopala, Saliigrama and Mahavira. After having audience and performing circumambulation of the deities, all the devotees gathered outside to hear the glories of this sacred spot. However, lacking clean space, not everyone could sit and even though the King of Jaipur built the temple, it does not have a dome

over it. The temple is managed by devotees of the Nimbarka Sampradaya. The pond or kunda dates back to ancient times and the water has turned green due to the presence of algae/fungi. Despite this, the water is still drinkable. The local people refer to this pond as ‘Santoya’. It is said that there are two probable reasons for naming this place Santanu Kunda. The first reason is that Srimati Yasoda performed penance here in order to attain Kṛṣṇa as her son. After obtaining Kṛṣṇa as her son, she was at peace, thus this name. The other reason is that the father of Bhisma, King Santanu of Candravansa (the Moon Dynasty), performed severe penances here, thus the name, ‘Santanu Pond’.

Upon the completion of these activities, all the devotees boarded the buses at noon. Arrangements were made for devotees to stay at Old Govardhana and Agarwal guesthouses . As there were many devotees, adjustments of accommodation were necessary, pleasing some and displeasing others. However, all was settled in due course and by the time the devotees had taken prasadam, it was

3.00 PM. The devotees rested for some time and then started circumambulation of the various holy places at 5.00 PM, returning late at night, which made walking difficult due to the darkness.. During circumambulation, they visited the following places:

Cakresvara Mahadeva (Caklesvara Mahadeva):

This temple is situated on the northern bank of Manasi Ganga at Govardhana. There is an old Neem tree near to the temple and underneath is the sitting or chanting site of Sanatana Goswami. Just a bit beyond that is a temple where the Presiding Deities are Sri Gaura – Nityananda.

ei cakratirtha dekha ahe srinivasa imhara kripate purna haya abhilasa
cakratirtha parama prasiddha govardhane sri rādhā krsnera dola-krida ei

sthane

(Bhakti-Ratnakara – 5/724-25)

"O Srinivasa, please see this Cakra-tirtha which, by its mercy, all desires are fulfilled. Cakra-tirtha is famous in Govardhana because Sri Sri Radha Krsna performed pastimes here."

aho dolakrida-rasavara bharotfulla vadno mahu srigandharva-girivadharo tou pratimadhu sarvivrindam yatra prakatit-amudandolayti tata prasidham govinda-sthalamidmudaram vata bhaje

"Oh! In every spring season, during the swing festival time, the cowherd damsels swing Sri Sri Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and derive much joy from such pastimes. Thus I meditate on this famous place of Sri Govinda."

As per Bhakti-Ratnakara and the desire of Lord Siva, Srila Sanatana Goswami resided here and meditated upon Sri Kṛṣṇa. He would circumambulate Govardhana daily, but in old age it became increasingly difficult for him to continue this practice. Observing this, Sri Gopinatha became perturbed by the great effort of his devotee to perform circumambulation. Therefore, assuming the guise of a cowherd boy, He came to see Sanatana. At that time, Sanatana was tired due to the stress of circumambulation and was sweating profusely. The Lord in the form of a cowherd boy, waved His cloth up and down like a fan, to create a breeze to cool Sanatana. Soon the sweat on his body was dried up, allowing him to feel fresh again. Then the cowherd boy climbed Govardhana and brought down a small stone (sila) from the mountain, imprinted with the footmarks of Kṛṣṇa. He gave this sila to Sanatana, saying, "If you circumambulate this sila, it will be as good as circumambulating Govardhana." After saying this, He disappeared. Sanatana could understand that the boy was Kṛṣṇa Himself and was therefore delighted and enlightened. From then on he began circumambulating this sila daily. At present, this sila is residing in the Sri Sri Rādhā- Damodara temple at Sreedhama Vrindavana. It is mentioned in Bhakti Ratnkara that whenever Srimati Rādhā and Her friends would come to

the banks of Mansi-Ganga, Sri Kṛṣṇa, acting as a sailor, would take them across the Ganges in a boat.

Local people say that there were many mosquitoes at Caklesvara, which used to trouble everyone, including Sanatana Goswami while he was engaged in chanting. Thus, he decided to leave that place. At night, Lord Caklesavara Mahadeva appeared in a dream requesting him not to leave and assured him that there would no longer be any problems with mosquitos. Since that time there have been no mosquitoes at that place even though there are many in the surrounding areas.

The Face of Sri Giriraja Govardhana:

Near Manasi Ganges, the face of Govardhana is carved out of white and black stone.. The temple is similar to the Viswanatha Temple at Kasi. Local people say that the cowherders offered prayers to Giriraja at this location and that is why the local priests insist that visiting pilgrims also perform prayers here. The devotees purchased all the paraphernalia required for the performance of these prayers, from the local shopkeepers. Under the auspices of various saints, all the devotees circumambulated the temple and then offered flower garlands, prayers and a donation at the temple. Then everyone offered obeisances and sprinkled the water of Manasi Ganges over his or her head.

mathura pascima bhage 'govardhana-ksetra visama samsara dukha yaya dristimatra manasgangaya snana kare yei jana govardhane haredeve karye darsana annkutta-govardhana parikrama kare tara gatagati kabhu na haya samsare

(Bhakti-Ratnakara 5/679 – 681)

Appearance of Govardhana and the Meaning of the Appellation, ‘Girirāja’

The appearance of Śrī Govardhana in this world and how He acquired the appellation of ‘Girirāja’ is described in Śrī Gargācārya’s Garga-saṁhitā, Vṛndāvana-khaṇḍa, 2nd Chapter, in the conversation between Nanda Mahārāja and his senior advisor, the gopa Sananda. Sananda spoke to Nanda Mahārāja giving reference to the conversation between Pāṇḍu and Bhīṣma.

Desiring to appear in this world to allay the earth’s burden of grave sins committed by the demoniac, Śrī Kṛṣṇa directed Rādhikā to appear along with Him. However, Rādhārāṇī expressed Her unwillingness to go to a place where Vṛndāvana, Yamunā and Śrī Govardhana were not present. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then sent His own transcendental spiritual realm of Vraja-dhāma, an area of 84 krośas or 252 kilometers (1 krośa is equal to 3 kilometers), to descend to India in this world. Vraja-dhāma is not a part of the material world consisting of earth, water, fire, air and sky. Govardhana appeared as the son of the mountain Droṇa in Śālmalī Island in western India. All the demigods were exceedingly delighted at the appearance of Govardhana, and showered down flowers.

All the big mountains such as the Himālayas and Sumeru were happy to hear about Govardhana’s appearance. They came to pay their homage to Govardhana and to worship Him. In their prayers they said, “Since Govardhana is the holy place of pastimes of theSupreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental sweet realm of Goloka, He is the king of all mountains and the crown of Goloka. He is like an umbrella for Parabrahman Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Vṛndāvana is within His lap.” Since then, Govardhana has been renowned as “Girirāja.”

Pulastya Muni is one of the seven mind-born sons of Brahmā known as the Mānasa-Putra. Once upon a time, Pulastya Muni was traveling on pilgrimage and came to Śālmalī Island. There he was astonished and charmed to see the extraordinary beauty of Govardhana mountain adorned with a variety of fruit and flower trees, pleasant sitting places, springs, radishes, soft grass and other wonderful things. When Pulastya Muni approached Droṇācala, he was worshipped by Droṇācala. Pulastya Muni said to Droṇa, “I live in Kāśī which has special significance due to the presence of the Ganges and Viśveśvara Mahādeva. Sinners go there to get salvation, but my desire is to perform penance

there after installing Govardhana.” Although extremely worried due to his affection for the child, Droṇācala was fearful of being cursed by Pulastya Muni and directed the child to go to the holy land of Bhārata (India) with the Muni. Initially, Govardhana was 64 miles long, 40 miles wide and 16 miles high [The present length of Govardhana is approximately 7 miles]. The question arose as to how the Muni would carry the big mountain Govardhana. Pulastya Muni said that he could easily carry the mountain on the palm of his hand. Govardhana agreed to go with the Muni on the condition that if he put Him anywhere on the ground while going, Govardhana would remain there due to His great weight and would not move. Pulastya Muni accepted the condition and promised to carry the mountain to the destination without putting Him down on the land. The Muni then began to move slowly to his destination while carrying Govardhana on the palm of his right hand. But when the Muni reached Vraja-dhāma, Govardhana saw the Yamunā and Vṛndāvana and remembered the sweet pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. He wanted to remain there and therefore became very heavy. The Muni became very much distressed and, forgetting his promise, put the mountain down on the land. After finishing his daily evacuation, bath and sandhyā- pūjā (silent recitation of prayers), Pulastya Muni returned to the place and asked Govardhana to sit on the palm of his hand. Govardhana, however, expressed His reluctance at moving. Pulastya Muni tried his best to lift the mountain but was unable to move Him. He became enraged and cursed Govardhana that He would diminish in size everyday according to the measure of one sesame seed.

The present diminished Govardhana is about 7 miles long. As long as Govardhana exists, the current black age of Kali-yuga will not be able to show its paramount power. But after thousands of years when Govardhana and the Yamunā have disappeared, Kali will be vehemently strong and all living beings will be oppressed and tortured to the extreme. The plight of human beings will then be precarious.

Govardhana-Dharan-Līlā (The lifting of Govardhana)

The Original Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself has revealed the ontological aspects and glories of Śrī Govardhana. It has been especially narrated in the most ancient history and civilization of India mentioned in the Ṛg Veda that Indra, the presiding deity of the clouds, was worshipped on the Earth so that crops could be grown and reanimated by rainfall. We hear from the Śrīmad- Bhāgavatam that according to human tradition and custom, annual worship of Indra was introduced in Vraja-dhāma so that there could be cultivation of land and protection of the cows. That was the only means of livelihood for the residents of Vraja-dhāma.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw that His father Nanda Mahārāja and other milkmen had collected many articles for the Indrayāg (oblation ceremony for the worship of Indra). Śrī Kṛṣṇa asked His father about the utility of performing such a function. Nanda Mahārāja said that if Indra, the presiding deity of the clouds was propitiated, there would be rainfall at the appropriate time. Thereby, paddy crops and grasses would be grown and that would be helpful for their livelihood and for the sustenance of the cows. Nanda Mahārāja again said, "If we neglect to perform our hereditary custom and duty, we will never get eternal welfare." After hearing this from His father and other milkmen, in order to infuriate Indra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa made the Vrajavāsīs (residents of Vraja) understand the futility of the worship of Indra and convinced them of the efficacy of worshipping Govardhana: "Indra is a demigod without any hold over the fruits of actions. He cannot award bad fruit for a good action and good fruit for a bad action. Birth and death, happiness and affliction are due to the actions of the individual souls. Even worldly actions are the cause of enmity, friendship and indifference. Indra cannot undo the fruits of actions. Although cultivation, trade, protection of cows and money-lending are the livelihood of the vaiśyas (trader class of society), the Vrajavāsīs have only accepted protection of the cows as their principal means of livelihood. The residents of Vraja-dhāma live in the forests and mountains; therefore, cities, crowded human habitation and houses are not good for them. Therefore, they should start an oblation function for the worship of the cows, brāhmaṇas and mountains. Just as an unchaste lady who leaves her husband cannot get actual welfare by serving another person, similarly, the Vrajavāsīs cannot get actual welfare by serving others, leaving the service of Girirāja Govardhana Who is their actual shelter." Kṛṣṇa advised the milkmen of Vraja-dhāma to worship Girirāja Govardhana with all the articles collected for the Indrayāg. He also advised them to bring milk, yoghurt and other milk products to cook different preparations of food, viz. Pāyasa (preparation of milk, rice and sugar), Mudgasūpa (soup prepared from a kind of pigeon pea or pulse), Piṣṭaka and

Śaṣkulī (sweet preparations made of rice, coconut, sugar and milk). Kṛṣṇa also directed them in the method of worship of Girirāja Govardhana: "It should be done by the ceremony of giving away cows and offering honorarium to the Vedic brāhmaṇas who will perform the oblation. Brāhmaṇas should be served with good preparations of food. After that, all others, including the Caṇḍālas (lowest caste), fallen persons and dogs should be served with appropriate offerings. Cows should be served with fresh grass. After Govardhana-pūjā, everyone should be adorned with ornaments, good dresses and anointments and should sit down to honour prasāda. Lastly, everyone should circumambulate Govardhana mountain with the cows, brāhmaṇas and the Fire-god." Being enchanted and subdued by his deep parental affection, Nanda Mahārāja worshipped Girirāja Govardhana and all the brāhmaṇas properly with all the articles collected for the Indrayāg, as per the desire of his beloved son Śrī Kṛṣṇa. After that, while serving the cows with grass and straw, Nanda Mahārāja performed parikramā of Govardhana with all the gopas and gopīs, with the cows leading in front. All the gopas were adorned with beautiful ornaments and the gopīs sitting on the bullock-carts performed Govardhana parikramā while constantly singing the glories of Kṛṣṇa. To proclaim to the Vrajavāsīs that Girirāja Govardhana is non-different from Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa repeatedly and loudly uttered the words, "I am the mountain Govardhana," and began to eat all the offerings given to Govardhana by extending thousand of hands. In another Form of Gopāla, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa made obeisances to His own manifested Form of Govardhana. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself introduced the practice of making prostrated obeisances to Govardhana as well as the circumambulation of Govardhana. Those who disregard Govardhana will be killed by Him in the form of serpents, etc.

Devarāja Indra, the emperor of the demigods, became furious at the Vrajavāsīs for stopping the Indrayāg. Indra oppressed the Vrajavāsīs by incessant heavy rainfall and a strong hailstorm-like cataclysm. All the Vrajavāsīs were severely distressed and took shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then protected them by lifting Govardhana with His left hand. Later on, Devarāja Indra could understand his mistake and came to Kṛṣṇa with the Surabhi cow. He worshipped Kṛṣṇa and prayed to Him to forgive his offence. Girirāja Govardhana is identical with Kṛṣṇa and He is also the foremost servitor of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī prays to Girirāja

Govardhana as follows:

giri-nṛpa! haridāsa-śreṇi-varyeti-nāmā mṛtam idam uditaṁ śrī-rādhikā-vaktra-candrāt vraja-nava-tilakatve kḷpta! vedaiḥ sphutaṁ me nija-nikaṭa-nivāsaṁ dehi govardhana tvam

(Śrī Govardhana-vāsa-prārthanā-daśakam, verse 8)

"O Gririrāja Govardhana, when your nectarean name was uttered from the lotus lips of Śrīmatī Rādhikā in Śrīmad- Bhāgavatam (10.21.18), 'Hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varyaḥ,' i.e. 'O simple-hearted innocent gopīs, this mountain is foremost amongst all the servitors of Śrī Hari,' then you were consecrated by all the Vedas as the new beautiful tilaka (sandalpaste mark) of Vraja- dhāma. I therefore pray to you to bestow me a dwelling place in your vicinity."

The Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa stopped the worship of the demigods and introduced the worship of Govardhana, i.e. He introduced the service of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa-bhaktas. One meaning of Govardhana is to enhance the sense-organs, so Govardhana- pūjā signifies the enhancement of the transcendental eternal spiritual sense-organs of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa-bhaktas.

Since heaps of various items of cooked vegetable dishes were offered to Girirāja Govardhana in Govardhana-pūjā, this festival is also well-known as the Annakūṭa Festival. Śrī Govardhana-dhāri Gopāla was originally installed by Vajra (the grandson of Kṛṣṇa and son of Aniruddha). Due to Śrīla Mādhavendra Puripāda's extraordinary pure devotion, Govardhana-dhāri Gopāla reappeared in Govardhana near the bank of Govinda-kuṇḍa. Mādhavendra Puripāda performed the Annakūṭa Festival in Kali-yuga. This topic is narrated in detail in the Caitanya-Caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā, chapter 4).

Lord Kṛṣṇa shifted focus on offering to Govardhana from demi- Gods. Thus he depicted and explained that Lord and his devotees shall be prayed. Word Govardhana means fulfilling the desires or satisfying the senses. Thus this means the process by which we satisfy senses of Lord Kṛṣṇa and his devotees is known as Govardhana Puja. Sri Rādhā Kunda is the tongue and mouth of Sri Govardhana. Giriraj is part and parcel of Sri Giridhari, thus Lord Caitanya

abstained all from climbing over the hill. And to set and example Lord Gaurhari himself did not climb Govardhana in order to have an audience with Sri Gopala over the hill. The pastime reveals that Sri Gopala came down from hill to give audience to Sri GaurHari. Sri Gopala arranged to spread the fear of Muslims. So devotees brought the deity from Annkuta village to Gatholi village. When Lord Chaitanya came to know about this, He went to have an audience with the deity after completing circumambulation of Giriraj Govardhana. Srila Rupa Goswami and Srila Sanatana Goswami followed the example set by Lord Chaitanya and did not climb the hill. When Rupa Goswami grew old he became anxious to have an audience with the deity of Sri Gopala. Gopala exhibited same pastime of spreading fear of Muslims and then coming down from the hill to Mathura City, at the house of Sri Vitthalesavara. Sri Gopala stayed there for a month and pleased his devotee Srila Rupa Goswami. When Sri Jagdananda started for Vrindavana, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu instructed him as:

śīghra āsiha, tāhāṅ nā rahiha cira-kāla govardhane nā caḍiha dekhite 'gopāla'

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitamrita Antya 13-39)

If one stays in Braja for long time, his devotion is affected by looking / pointing out faults of residents of Braja. One who has not been given right to enjoy transcendental mellows; they should not stay at Braja. Thus one must come from Braja soon. (Srila Bhakti Vinod Thakur)

govardhana dekhi' prabhu premāviṣṭa hañā nācite nācite calilā śloka paḍiyā

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitamrita Antya 18-33)

hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varyo yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayos tayor yat pānīya-sūyavasa-kandara-kandamūlaiḥ

(SB. 10/21/18)

This Govardhana is foremost among the servitors of Lord Hari. Thus he is exalted by the wonderful experience of tasting the dust of Lord Hari and is having water, fresh grass, fruits and vegetables and many beautiful places to sit and relax, thereby satisfying the cowherd boys and cows along-with Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balaramaa. Sri Gopala was installed by the grandson of Lord Hari, Braja (who was called from Dwarka and crowned by Pandavas as King of Mathura) and was arranged to appear again by Madhvendra Puri Pada. This pastime had been given in detail in Madhya Volume, chapter 4 of Caitanya Caritamrita. Devotees sang this pastime mentioned in Caitanya Caritamrita on the banks of Sri Govinda Kunda while circumambulating Govardhana. The Brajmandala book written during the year 1932 on the basis of Brajmandala circumambulation then under the auspices of His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Siddhant Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad, details this pastime as: Srila Madhvendra Puripada came to Govardhana before Sri Gaurhari. One day after circumambulating Govardhana, he took bath and sat under tree and was offering his prayers during evening, when a cowherd boy approached him. The boy gave a pot of milk to him and told that cowherd damsels of nearby village have sent him with milk for the renounced (Srila Madhvendra) and then he disappeared. During the same night Srila Puripada saw the same boy in his dream. The boy took him to a part of dense and deep forest by holding him hand and told him that Puri, I am lying here and am tolerating winter, summer, rain, etc, which is very troublesome. Please take me out of here. He boy pleaded him to take him over the top of Govardhana hill and establish a temple there. He told his name as Sri Govardhandhari Gopala. He said that son of Aniruddha and great - grandson of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Vrajnabha has established me. He told that he was staying over the hill but due to fear of Muslims, his servants left the deity here. Srila Puripada was delighted and amazed due to his dream. He at once went to nearby village and told about his dream to the residents of that village. He brought them to the part of forest and cut through that forest and took out the deity. They established the deity on a throne made out of stone over the top of Govardhana hill. Eventually they offered water and bathed with five different auspicious commodities. They organized a grand festival and offered heaps of various delicacies to Sri Gopala. Lord Kṛṣṇa during Dvapra Yuga and Srila Madhvendra Puripada during Kaliyuga organized prayer celebrations for Govardhana and Annkuta festival.

Manasi Ganges:

This kunda is situated almost one and a half miles to the southwest of Kusum Sarovara, and is asymmetrical in shape. Sri Kṛṣṇa simply willed it to be and this pond appeared, thus the name Manasi Ganges (which appeared due to the power of thinking or from the mind).

Once, Sri Nanda and Srimati Yasoda began a journey to bathe in the Ganges. On the way they rested at Govardhana during the night. Lord Kṛṣṇa was thinking that all the holy places are situated in Vraja, but seeing that these simple hearted cowherd men and women did not know this fact He decided to tell them. While Kṛṣṇa was contemplating in this way, Mother Ganges appeared there on her crocodile carrier (Makar) in view of all the residents of Vraja. Being very surprised, they began to discuss who she might be. Lord Kṛṣṇa then said: O my dear residents of Vraja, all holy places are situated in this Vraja area, yet you have planned to go outside of Vraja to take a dip in the Ganges. Thus, Mother Ganges has appeared so that you need bathe here only. This place will be now known as 'Manasi Ganges'. This Ganges appeared on the day of the dark Moon during the month of Kartika (October – November), which is the day of Deepawali. Thus, the faithful circumambulate the Ganges and celebrate the occasion by holding a festivalhere . Manasi Ganges is surrounded by Govardhana Hill in the southern and western directions. The banks ofthe Ganges at this place were built by the King of Jaipur, Man Singh. Later on, other kings of Bharatpur made further renovations. Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami has mentioned in his Vraja-vilasa book that Lord Kṛṣṇa and Srimati Rādhā enjoy boat rides at this place.

gandharvika murvimardana naubihara leela vinoda rasanirbhara bhoginiyama
govardhanojjwala silakulamunnatanti vicibharairvatu manasjahnavi mama

(Sri Vraja- vilasa)

“That Manasi Ganges, whose heart enjoys the pleasure of the mellows of the boat-riding pastimes of Lord Rādhā-Govinda and, who holds up transcendental Govardhana and its silas (transcendental stones), must protect me by the strength of her waves.”

dekhah manas ganga srikṛṣṇa ethaya nauka biharadi kare ananda hiyaya

(Sri Bhakti Ratnakara 5/674)

During Asadi Purnima, (June – July) (the residents of Vraja name this date as Mudia Purnima), millions of people gather to circumambulate Govardhana and to bathe in the Ganges. There are three famous hills in Vraja—Govardhana, Nadisvara and Barsana. They are the parts and parcels of Visnu, Rudra and Brahma respectively. Manasi Ganges appeared from Giriraja. Some local people claim that this is the place where Giriraja accepted the prayers of the residents of Vraja.

Sri Harideva Temple:

A temple of Sri Harideva is situated on the southern banks of Manasi Ganges.. Sri Harideva is the caretaker of the fifth petal of lotus- shaped Mathura and is also mentioned in the ancient scriptures. Lord Caitanya stayed at this temple for a night:

preme matta cali’ āilā govardhana-grāma ‘harideva’ dekhi’ tāhāṅ ha-ilā praṇāma ‘mathurā’-padmera paścima-dale yāṅra vāsa ‘harideva’ nārāyaṇa—— ādi parakāśa harideva-āge nāce preme matta hañā saba loka dekhite āila āścarya śuniyā

(CC Madhya 18/17-19)

The presiding deity of this temple is the holder of Govardhana, Sri Harideva but Rādhārāṇī is not present. Sri Saligrama is also installed here.

govardhanaṁ parikraman dṛṣṭva devaṁ hariṁ prabhum
rajasuyaśvamedhabhyaṁ phalam prapnoty asaṁśayaḥm

(Adi-Varaha Purana)

“If one obtains audience with Sri Harideva Ji after circumambulating Govardhana, he gets the fruits attained by performing one Rajasuya Yajna.”

This temple is built from red stones from Bharatpur, as is the temple of Sri Govinda Deva at Vrindavana. The dome structure on top of the temple is also similar to that of Govinda Deva Ji, which was destroyed.

mathura pascima bhage ‘govardhan ksetra’ visama samsara dukha yaya dristimatra manasa gangaya snana kare yei jana govardhane harideve karye darsana annkutta-govardhan parikrama kare tar gatagati kabhu na haya samsare

(Bhakti Ratnakara – 5/679-81)

Manasi Devi:

On the banks of Brahma-kunda, is situated an ancient temple of Goddess Manasi. As Mother Ganges is the presiding deity of the Ganges River, similarly

Goddess Manasi is the presiding deity of Manasi Ganges. Some name this goddess as Mansa Devi. To the north of this temple is Manasi Ganges and to the south is Brahma- kunda.

Sri Brahma-kunda:

Brahma-kunda is located in the northeast corner (wind-cone) of the Sri Harideva temple. At present the water is full of algae and fungi. Since stones of Giriraja keep falling into this pond, the devotees were reluctant to go to the pond to sprinkle water on his or her head, fearing the committing of offences by accidentally stepping on the stones. Therefore, the devotees offered obeisances from a distance. As found in Caitanya Caritamrita, when Lord Caitanya visited Vraja, this pond contained crystal clear water. Thus, Mahaprabhu bathed here. Sri Balbhadra Bhattacharya prepared and performed to Lord Caitanya on the banks of this pond at that time. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu rested in the temple of Sri Harideva Ji during the night.

atrajatam brahmakundam brahmana tosito hari indra-dilokpalanam jatani ca saransi ca

(Mathura Khanda)

"This is the appearance place of Brahma-kunda, where the Lord of Brahma, Sri Hari, performs His pastimes. Situated nearby are the kundas of other demi-gods."

hradaṁ tatra maha-bhage druma-gulma-latavṛtam catvari tatra tīrthani punyani ca śubhani ca aidraṁ purvena parśvena yama-tīrthaṁ tu dakṣine varunaṁ pascime tīrthaṁkauveraṁ cottarena tu tatra madhye sthitaś cahaṁkrīḍayiṣye yad icchaya

(Adi-Varaha Purana)

“O glorious one! On Govardhana is a pond named after Brahma, full of greenery and which is very pious. Four holy places are also situated on the hill, which are beneficial for all. To the north of the kunda is the holy place of Indra, to the west is the holy place of Varuna, to the south is the holy place of Yama and to the north is the holy place of Kuvera. I shall stay at that kunda for my pastimes.”

ei dekha brahma-kund – mahima apara caripasarve tirtha caru purtane pacara

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5/670)

11 October, Thursday (Residing at Govardhana):

The devotees circumambulated Vraja under the auspices of His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Pramod Puri Goswami Maharaja. They had earlier expressed their desire to circumambulate Govardhana under his guidance. As he was quite elderly, (approximately 85 years), he could not circumambulate Govardhana in a single day and he expressed his desire not to circumambulate while riding a horse-cart or cart pulled by a man. Thus it was decided to complete the fourteen mile circumambulation in two days rather than one. Though he experienced much bodily pain and discomfort, still he completed the circumambulation by supporting himself with one hand on a stick and the other hand on the shoulder of a devotee. All the devotees left at 8.00 AM from Govardhana guest house, circumambulated Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda and visited Uddhava-kunda, Sri Kunja Bihari Gaudiya Math (established by Srila Prabhupada) the samadhi of Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami,

the Deity of Srimati Jahnavi Devi, the bhajan-kutirs (chanting sites or cottage) of Srila Kṛṣṇa Dasa Kaviraja Goswami; Srila Ragunatha Bhatt Goswami; Srila Jiva Goswami and Srila Saraswati Goswami Thakura, the Five Pandava banks, the Sri Jagannath Temple, Lalita- kunda, the resting place of Sri Mahaprabhu, Sri

Kusum Sarovara (lake), Sri Narada Pond and Daan Ghata. After this, the devotees went to Sri Gaudiya Sevasrama established by Srila Bhakti Bhaktisambandha Pavata Maharaja. The devotees of the Sevashram had organized a festival to honor the circumambulating devotees and prasadam was served to all. The devotees then rested for a while and returned to the guesthouse. The evening discourses and arotik took place as usual.

Sri Uddhava-kunda:

This pond is on the western side of Kusum Sarovara. The wives of Kṛṣṇa met Uddhava here and Sri Uddhava glorified Vraja and the pastimes of the Lord at their request. Uddhava who holds a most respectable position among all the descendents of the Vrsni Dynasty, was a disciple of Brihaspati and a close friend of Kṛṣṇa. He came to Vraja acting upon the instructions of Kṛṣṇa.

Sri Rādhā-kunda and Sri Syama-kunda

B oth these ponds are in the area of Bahulavana. Approximately 3 miles north of Govardhana is a village called Aarita. This is the place where both ponds appeared. To exhibit His eternal pastimes filled with ambrosial nectarean prema, Lord Kṛṣṇa killed the demon Arista here, who had taken the form of a boar. Afterwards, He wished to touch Rādhārāṇī, but She jokingly rebuked Him saying that He could not touch Her with His impure hands. Since He had killed a boar and the boar was actually a demon, She told him to purify himself by bathing in all the holy places before touching Her. Kṛṣṇa said: "I shall bathe in the water of all the holy places by calling them all together at this spot." He stomped on the earth and created a depression which immediately filled up the water of all the holy places. The personification of each holy place also appeared before Kṛṣṇa, and introduced themselves while praising Him in different ways. In view of Rādhā and the Gopinis, Krnsa then took a bath in the water while uttering the name of each holy place.. These events occurred during the month of

Kartik, at midnight of the eigth day of the dark moon. That is how Syama Kunda appeared. Then Kṛṣṇa joked with Rādhā, which lead to the digging of a pond on the west shore of Syama-kunda by Rādhā, and Her friends. This amazed Kṛṣṇa. However, there was only one problem—there was no water present in the large new pond and, therefore, no holy place! All the girls were wondering what they should now do. Then Kṛṣṇa offered them water from Syama-kunda.. Performing the pastime of arrogance, the cowherd damsels replied that He had washed away His sin of killing the demon Arista and this had now made the water impure. Thus it was of no use to them. Rādhā ji further told Kṛṣṇa that She and Her friends would bring water from Manasi Ganges to fill this Rādhā Sarovara. Hearing all this, Kṛṣṇa indicated to the personifications of all the holy places that they should go to Radha and Her friends to offer their prayers and requests. This pleased Rādhā and She instructed them to enter into Her pond. Immediately water from Syama-kunda broke its barrier and began flowing toward Rādhā-kunda, filling it very rapidly.. Thus, Rādhā-kunda appeared. At present we can still see the broken edges of the banks between the two ponds. Through these broken banks, water from both ponds keeps on flowing from one point to the other. Only those devotees, who are greatly blessed by Sri Kṛṣṇa to hear from a spiritual master in the lineage of Srila Rupa Goswami who is established in madhurya rasa with Sri Kṛṣṇa, can understand the sweetness and meaning of this pastime. People under illusion or those engaged in material activities cannot understand this. These ponds are surrounded by various trees and creepers and are the scene of the most amazing and playful transcendental pastimes of the eternally youthful Sri Rādhā and Sri Kṛṣṇa. (Sri Vraja-mandala Parikrama 1932)

vaikuṇṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād vṛndāraṇyam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇāt tatrāpi govardhanaḥ rādhā-kuṇḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ premāmṛtāplāvanāt kuryād asya virājato giri-taṭe sevāṁ vivekī na kaḥ

(Sri Upadesamrita 9th verse)

Among all the holy places, Sri Rādhā-kunda is best. This is the purport of the 9th Verse of Sri Upadesamrita. The holy place known as Mathurā is spiritually superior to Vaikuṇṭha, the transcendental world, because Lord Krsna appeared there. Superior to Mathurā-purī is the transcendental forest of Vṛndāvana due to

the fact that Kṛṣṇa’s rāsa-līlā pastimes were performed there. Even superior to the forest of Vṛndāvana is Govardhana Hill, for it was raised by the Divine Hand of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and was the site of His various loving pastimes. And, above all, the superexcellent Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa stands supreme, for it is overflooded with the ambrosial nectarean prema of the Lord of Gokula, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Where, then, is that intelligent person who is unwilling to serve this divine Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which is situated at the foot of Govardhana Hill?

In due course, Rādhā-kunda and Syama-kunda disappeared but Lord Caitanya, during his visit to the twelve forests of Vraja, relocated both ponds at Arista village. Upon first glance, they looked like rice fields. Lord Caitanya would take water for bathing from the rice fields and would offer many prayers to the kundas. Local villagers would refer to the fields as gouri (white) and kali (black) respectively, without looking into the reason for such odd names. Only when Lord Caitanya revealed both ponds did the villagers learn about their existence. At that time, the banks of Rādhā-kunda and Shyama-kunda were not brick laden. One of the associates of Lord Caitanya, Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, arranged the cleaning and construction of concrete banks. Events unfolded as follows: O ne day Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami was contemplating that it might be a good idea to have concrete banks for both kundas. Catching himself thinking in this way, he then rebuked himself for having such a material desire but eventually disposed of this desire. A certain rich man visited Sri Badrinatha to offer lot of money to Sri Badrinarayana But the Omnipresent Lord, knowing everything, appeared in a dream of the rich man and requested him to visit Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami to offer him money for the purpose of Rādhā Kund and Syama Kund. The Lord told the man that in case Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami should refuse to accept the money then he must be reminded of his wish for construction around the ponds and that he should also tell him of his dream. The rich man started off immediately for Arista village and, after reaching there, told everything to Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami agreed to accept the money, as this was the desire of the Lord, and he immediately began the work of cleansing the ponds and the arrangement of different ceremonies. At that time the five Pandava brothers were residing on the banks of Syama-kunda in the form of a trees. Since the builders wanted the pond to be square, they planned to cut down the trees. Then, Yuddhistara appeared in a dream of Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, and informed him that he and his brothers were residing there as trees on the banks

of the pond. Thus, Srila Raghunatha dasa Goswami instructed everyone not to cut down the trees. As a result, the construction of Syama- kunda is not square. On the northern banks of Rādhā-kunda, towards the Northeast, are eight places of the pastimes of the eight main friends of Rādhārāṇī, namely: Lalita, Viśākhā, Citra, Indulekha, Campaklata, Rangdevi, Tungvidhya and Sudevi. Among the eight places on the banks of Rādhākunda, on the northen side, is the grove of Lalita, where Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada used to chant. As per Gaudiya principles, the afternoon pastimes of Rādhā Govinda ji at Rādhā Kunda are most melodious and important, whereas the followers of Nimbarka consider the night pastimes to be more auspicious. It may be that they are unable to understand the importance of the afternoon pastimes. Srila Prabhupada used to instruct his disciples by referring to Sri Updesamrita by Srila Rupa Goswami:

bhaktiman jana haite premanistha premanistha haite gopi sriharir prestha gopi haite sriradhika krsnpriyatma se Rādhā-sarsi priya haya tanr sma se kunda asraya cchadi kona muds jana anyatra vasiya caya harir sevana

"Rādhā Kunda is as dear to Kṛṣṇa as Srimati Rādhā is. Most elevated devotees of Kṛṣṇa always tend to take shelter of Rādhākunda."

Rādhā Kunda is the most suitable place of residence for devotees. In the transcendental Vraja, the jiva soul obtains the transcendental form of a cowherd maid and remains as a servitor in the kunja of a sakhi at Rādhā Kunda. The sakhi acts as the soul's transcendental spiritual master while the devotee continues to chant the holy name of the Lord in his or her gross body. Taking the shelter of the Holy Name, actually intelligent followers of Caitanya serve Lord Kṛṣṇa in His eightfold pastimes under the guidance of Rādhārāṇī. — Srila Bhakti Vinod Thakur

Gaudiya followers of Srila Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada serve the divine couple under the main friend of Rādhā Ji i.e. Srimati Lalita or Srimati Rupa

(Rupa Goswami) who works under Srimati Lalita. They consider it as the most desirable thing. Kṛṣṇa's Great Grandson, Vajranabha, built a pond at the site of Syama Kunda. When the water level of Syama Kunda recedes then one can see the pond built by Vrajanabha. Top the south east of Syama Kunda is one Tamala tree, where Caitanya Mahaprabhu sat for a while. A small temple was built there as a memoir. During circumambulation, devotees sprinkle water of the pond on their head and pay obeisances and circumambulate that place.

Important banks of Rādhā Kunda:

1. *Sitting place of Lord Caitanya*:

On the south-east bank of Syama Kunda is this place.

Details have already been given.

2. *Bhramara bank:*

This is next to the sitting place of Lord Caitanya.

3. *Asta Sakhi bank:*

It is on the south eastern side of Syama kunda in between Mahaprabhu's place and Gaya bank.

4. *Gaya bank:*

This is situated on the eastern banks of Syama kunda. When you move from Gopa well towards Rādhā Kunda, you pass by this place. Residents of Braja offer prayers to their forefathers at this place instead of Gaya.

5. *Bank of Srila Jiva Goswami*:

This bank is on the eastern end of Lalita Kunda. On the east end of this bank is the chanting site of Srila Jiva Goswami.

6. *Panca-Pandava banks*:

These are on the northern side of Syama Kunda, east of the manas-pavana banks.

7. *Manas-pavana banks*:

These are situated on the northwest side of Syama Kunda and it is said that Srimati Rādhārani bathes here during the afternoon.

8. *Govinda Ghata*:

This is on the eastern bank of Rādhā Kunda.

9. *Jhulanvata Ghata*:

This is on the western end of Rādhā Kunda. Over this place is an old banyan tree on which Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa enjoy

swinging pastimes.

10. *Jahnava Ghata*:

This is on the northern end of Rādhā Kunda. It is said that when Srimati Jahnava Devi visited Rādhā Kunda, she rested here and bathed at this place.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada always considered Rādhā Kunda as non-different from Srimati Rādhā (thus he never entered the pond). He used to sprinkle water of the pond over his head and pay obeisances. A materialist cannot see or experience the transcendence of this place. Their dip at this place is totally different from a dip by a devotee. Srila Prabhupada wrote: ‘It is very rare for devotees serving Kṛṣṇa as servant, friend or parent to take a dip at Rādhā Kunda, what to speak of materialists’.

All the circumambulating devotees took a dip or sprinkled water over their heads as per their choice or qualification at Rādhā Kunda. Then they all chanted and offered prayers. After this all the devotees gathered at Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami’s samadhi, performed Sankirtan and circumambulated the tomb. Devotees were served breakfast there. Then devotees went to Sri Kunj Bihari Math where they rested and glorified Rādhā Kunda by singing ‘Rādhā kunda tata kunja kutira…’ etc. Later they honoured prasadam given by the brajbasi panda.

Kusum Sarovar:

Kusum Sarovar is also known as suman sarovar – the Sanskrit name of Kusum is sumanas. Kusum sarovar is about 1.5 miles south west of Sri Rādhā Kund. It is said that Sri Vrishabhānu Nandini came here to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the pretension of plucking flowers. There are two temples of Sri Baladeva on the west bank of Sarovar and in the south west side there is the temple of Uddhavji. Bajrangji is seated near Kusum Sarovar. — (Sri Brajmandal Parikrama 1932).

dekhah Kusum sarovar aei vane / donhari adbhut rang Kusum chayane//

Narad Kunda:

Narad Kunda is situated to then south east of Kusum Sarovar. According to the preaching of Śrī Vrinda Devi, the sage Narada had performed penance here. Naradaji's deity is seated in a temple on the western bank of the Kunda.

aei ye narad Kunda narad aethate / tap kari kela purna ye chil manete // muni-manorath vyakt purane ashesh / manorath-siddh hetu vrinda updesh//

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5.609-10)

As it was late, instead of taking the long route all the devotees went by the shorter muddy way to perform Pranam to Narad Kunda.

Dan Ghati:

ahe shrinivas, aei danghati sthan / rasikendra kṛṣṇa aetha sadhe gavyadaan //

aei sthane shri chaitany sanger viprere / jijnasena daan pasangadi dhire-dhire//

daan prasangadi vipra kahil vivari /suni harshe mand mand hase gaur hari //

dan ghat param nirjan sthan hay/ dan ghat nam keh 'Kṛṣṇa vedi' kaya //

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5/661-63,667)

In Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, there is a loving dispute between Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys about who He favours and between Srimati Rādhārāṇī and the Gopis about

Her favour. These loving quarrels enlighten the miracle of the sweetness of the pastimes of Braja. Extreme love is present in great quarrel; it cannot be understood by simple intellect. Such miracle of love's sweetness cannot be seen anywhere else except Braja.

Once, Vasudevji organized a yajna (fire sacrifice) for the benefit of Baladeva and Śrī Kṛṣṇa at the bank of Govind Kunda, which is situated under Giriraj Govardhan. He appointed Bhaguri, the son in law of Garg Rishi, as a priest (Purohit) of the yajna. The news of this yajna ceremony spread far and wide. Vrishbhānu's daughter Srimati Rādhārāṇī, along with her friends, took the permission of their elders, and set out to sell butter at the place of sacrifice. But Sri Kṛṣṇa came to know in advance that Rādhārāṇī and her friends were going towards the place of sacrifice, so in order to collect taxes, He went with His sakhas to guard the way as the protector of Dan Ghati in Govardhan. The place where He sat is called 'Kṛṣṇa Vedi'. When Srimati Radhika reached there, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the form of a tax collector, demanded taxation for things that were got by King Madan. At this, both began to quarrel in a wild way. He said clearly that until they gave butter and other things, He would not let Rādhārāṇī and the Gopis go. When the quarrel reached its extreme, Paurnamasi interfered and solved the matter some way. Following this pastime, Brajbasi pandās forcefully collect tax from pilgrims by spreading cloth at Dan Ghati. It is not that the Brajbasi Pandas are Sakhas of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and parikramakari pilgrims are Gopis. In fact the Pandās act in this way to collect donations and the devotees, according to custom, offer donations for the service of the Brajbasi's. There is a temple of DaniRai above Giriraj. This pastime has been described in detail in the Dankeli-kaumudi composed by Srila Rupa Goswami.

ghatkrida kutu kitamana nagrendro navino dani bhutva madan nrpa terga vyadan achlena yatra pratah sakhi bhirbhito vestitah sankurodh sri gandharvam nijganvritam nomi tam Kṛṣṇa vedim

(Stavali composed by Srila Raghunath Das Goswami)

The heart anxious by the curiosity of Dan Grahan Kreeda (Donation accepting

game) at the Ghat, The ever youthful and best of lovers Sri Kṛṣṇa, assumed the form of a tax collector in the morning. Surrounded by His cowherd friends He pretended to accept and then keep milk and other things got by king Madan, from Srimati Rādhārāṇī Who was surrounded by her friends. I pray to that place of Kṛṣṇa's pastime.

Staying place Govardhan (12th Oct Friday):

Parikramakari devotees, in order to complete the remaining half parikrama of Govardhan set out from the Dharamshala at 7 a.m. They went to Śrī Rādhā Govind temple of Aniyor village, Govind Kunda, the place of Srila Madhavendra Puripad, Apsara Kunda, Haraji Kunda, and Poochhari ka Lauta etc. and with Sankirtan procession returned to Govardhan at 12pm. The Braj Mandal Parikrama book (published in 1932 by Śrī Gaudiya Math) has given a list of places worth visiting during Giriraj Parikrama.

Kusum Sarovar, Uddhav Kunda, Narad Kunda, Ratansinhasan, Gvala Talab (pond), Bihar Kunda, Killal Kunda, Manasi Ganga, Govardhan village, Paap mochan Kunda, Indradhwaj Vedi, Balarama Kunda, Ras-mandal of Baladevji, Srinagar temple, Gandharv Kunda, Aniyor village, Sankarshan Kunda, Gauri Kunda, Nipa (Kadamba) Kunda, Govind Kunda, Srila Madhvendra Puri's Vishram sthal, Appearance place of Srila Madhvendra Puri's Gopal or Śrī Nathji, place of Annakoot Puja, Shakru-tritha, Śrī Narsimha dev, Apsara Kunda, Poochari, Cave of Raghav Pandit, Mukut Chinha (sign), Surabhi Kunda, Giri Govardhan dharan sthal, Haraji Kunda, Gopal pura (yati pura), Śrī Nathji's temple, Śrī Govardhanji's Mukharvind, Baithak of Ballabhacharyaji, Bil Chu Kunda, Gyan- Agyan tree, Hanuman's temple, temple of DaniRajji, Dan Ghati, Shyamasalila, Chakreshwar Mahdev, Bhajan Kutir of Sanatan Goswami, temple of Śrī Gaur Nityanandji, Mukut Sign, Śrī Hari dev, temple of Śrī Manasi Devi, Śrī Brahma Kunda, and Śrī Hanumanji.

Aniyor village:

Śrī Giriraj Govardhan is non different from Giridhari Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so Mahaprabhuji and the scriptures forbid climbing on it. This is why devotees while performing parikrama, walk only by the side and recite Kirtan. The highest portion of Giriraj Govardhan is situated in the middle of Yatipura and Anyaur villages towards south. In Bhakti Ratnakar, this holy place is called Aniyor. It was here that by Kṛṣṇa's order Nanda and the other Gopas stopped the worship of Indra and started the worship of Govardhan by offering various kinds of foods. The voice of Govardhan resounded in the sky, “Ani Aur Ani Aur” (Bring me more water) and for that reason this place is called Aniyor. By visiting Annyakuta all desires will be fulfilled.

aei aniyor gram girisannidhane / aethaya kotukanta aetha ye kotuk ta kahite keva jaane ? nandadik gopa indrapuja tyag kari / kṛṣṇaer kathaya puje govardhan giri //

vividh samagri govardhan bhog dila / kṛṣṇae ekrupe tara sakla bhunjila //

megh haite gabher vachal uccharya / 'ani aur, ani aur' var var kaya //

gop gopi bhunjayena kotuke apaar / aei hetu 'aniyour' naam se ehaar //

annakuta-sthan aei-dekh sri nivas / aei sthan darshane purna haya abhilash //

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5/633-638)

vrijendravarsharpita bhogamucche-dhurtva vulkayamgharirutkah / varen rādhām chalyan vibhunkte yannaannkutam tadaham prapdhe//

(stavavali composed by Srila Raghunath Das Goswami in Vrajvilas)

'Sri Kṛṣṇa, the killer of Aga, took all the food which was offered to Govardhan by Sri Nanda by transforming himself into a huge body and by depriving Rādhā

of a boon. I go in shelter of that Annakoot Ji.'

Śrī Rādhā Govind temple:

Devotees visited the ancient temple of Śrī Rādhā Govind situated on a high place near Śrī Govind Kunda. The pastimes of Govardhan's appearance, the foundation of Govardhan worship by Kṛṣṇa and the ending of Indra yajna, the anger of Indra and his causing rain for seven days, the Govardhan Dharan Leela of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the ending of Indra's misconception have already been explained. In order to preserve the memory of all these events, Śrī Rādhā Govind temple was established.

Śrī Govind Kunḍ:

neecheh prodh bhayat svyam surpatih paado vidutyeh cheh swarg gaanslileschkar surabhi dwara abhishekotsavam

govindasya navam gavamadhiptarajyae sfutam kotukatteryat pradurbhut sada sfurtu tadgovindkundaam drshoh

(stavali vrajavilas)

The place Govinda Kunḍa has its own glory because it was here that Indra performed the Abhishek of Kṛṣṇa. Out of fear of Lord Kṛṣṇa Indra performed the Abhishek ceremony of Kṛṣṇa in front of everyone by bringing the holy water of Mandakani from Sarbui. From this holy water Govinda Kunda was formed.

yatrabhiṣikto bhagavan maghona yadu-vairina govinda-kunḍaṁ taj-jataṁ

snana-matreṇa mokṣa-dam

In the Mathurā-khaṇḍa it is said:

The Supreme Personality of Godhead was bathed by Indra, who had become the enemy of Vraja. From that bathing Govinda-kunḍa was created. Govinda-kunḍa grants liberation to those who do nothing more than bathe in it.

aei shrigovind kund' mahima anek / aetha indra kel govinder abhishek aei srigovind kund snane fal yat / purane prchar taha ke blevae krat aitha shakra kṛṣṇa stuti kel nanamate / bahu fal shakra tirtha snan tarpanete

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5.640,642,644)

Place of Śrī Madhvendra Puripad:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya Mahaprabhuji performed the pastimes of accepting initiation from Srila Ishwar Puripad, disciple of Sri Madhvendra Puripad. He is the first seed of Bhakti Kalpataru (the creeper of devotion) served in Madhva Gaudiya Sampradaya. Before this there was no sign of devotion filled with the mellows of conjugal love in Śrī Madhava Sampradaya.

-Srila Sarswati Goswami Prabhupad

Srila Madhvendra Puripada came to Govardhana before Sri Gaurhari. One day after circumambulating Govardhana, he took bath and sat under tree and was offering his evening prayers, when a cowherd boy approached him. The boy gave him a pot of milk and told him that cowherd damsels of a nearby village had sent him with milk for the renunciate (Srila Madhvendra) and then he disappeared. During the same night Srila Puripada saw the same boy in his dream. The boy took him to a dense part of the deep forest while holding his hand and told him: 'Puri, I am lying here and am tolerating winter, summer, rain,

etc, which is very troublesome. Please take me out of here'. The boy pleaded with him to take him over the top of Govardhana hill and establish a temple there. He said his name was Sri Govardhandhari Gopala. He said that the son of Aniruddha and great grandson of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Vrajnabha, had established him and that he had been staying over the hill but due to fear of Muslims, his servants had left the deity here. Srila Puripada was delighted and amazed due to his dream. He at once went to the nearby village and related his dream to the residents of that village. He brought them to the deep part of the forest where he cut through and took out the deity. They established the deity on a throne made out of stone at the top of Govardhana hill. Eventually they offered water and bathed the Lord with five different auspicious commodities. Then they organized a grand festival and offered heaps of various delicacies to Sri Gopala. Lord Kṛṣṇa during Dvapara Yuga and Srila Madhvendra Puripada during Kaliyuga organized prayer celebrations for Govardhana and the Annakuta festival.

This pastime has been given in detail in the Madhya Volume, chapter 4 of Caitanya Caritamrita. Srila Madhvendra Puripad's nature was not to ask for anything. After Govardhan parikrama he sat under a tree for Bhajan at the bank of Govind Kunda in the evening and here Giridhari Gopal appeared before him. Unfortunately Gaudiya Vaishnavas are deprived of outward darshan of that place. At present the followers of Ballabh Sampradaya perform this service.

Apsara Kunda:

dekhha 'apsara kund' govardhan ante aetha snan karye param bhagyavante

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5.651)

Haraji Kunda, Gandharv Kunda, Sankarshan Kunda, Gauri Kunda, Neep Kunda, and Surabhi Kunda.

Sankarshan, Mahadev, Parvati, Gandharv, Surabhi, Neep, Kadamb tree and the Apsaras are all present at there own places in Braj to worship Lord Śrī Nandanandan Kṛṣṇa.

aei dekh sankarshan kund tejomaya aetha snan kaele manorath sedha haya

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5.618)

dekhah gandharva kund atiramya sthal aetha kṛṣṇa gungane gandharva vihila

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5.621)

paith gram adi ramya sthan dekhaiya / gauri tirthae pandita aila ultiya // pandit ullase kahe dekh srinivas / aei gauritirthae haya adbhut vilas // gauritirtha neep vriksharaj manohar / 'neep kund' dekh aei param sundar //

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5.630-632)

In Braj Mandal parikrama, it has been directed that Gauri tirtha or Gauri Kunda means Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī's Kunda. In different places of Govind Lilamrita, Gauri tirtha has been described in reference of Chandravali.

batyahatya chanchuna labbhitaso sheshya batya sanirsadham svsrvya

gauri-sangotkaen ten svasangade gauritirtham tat sapryapacchlokatya

yatasu tasu laghu sukshma dhiyam subhanch sa sarike suchtura nydisat pravrateh

Agham vrijaya sujavam abhimanyu matushchandravalerath param girijalayay

(Govind lilaamrita astha sarga 7999)

Vrinda Devi said – O Radhe, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who expertly killed Trinavarta, is curious for your company. Sakhi, you worship Gauri with the pretension of Gauri's worship, so He has sent Shavya to Gauri tirth with Chandravali. After this when the Sakhis came there, VrindaDevi appointed Sukshma-buddhi and Subhanamini, two speedy female parrots to know the whole matter. She sent one Sakhi to know the nature of Abhimanyu's mother Jatila and she ordered other to go to Gauri tirtha to know the nature of Chandravali.

Indradhwaj Vedi:

indradhvalam vedi aei-aetha nandray Kariten indrapuja sarvalokegaya

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5.615)

In the Braj Mandal Parikrama book, Srila Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad has expressed his views about Indradhwaj Vedi.

This is situated in the eastern part of Govardhan Gram. At this place Maharaj Śrī Nanda used to worship Indra dev every year. Sri Nanda Maharaj's woship was not like the materialistic worship of demigods. The materialist worships the Lord of the rain, Indra, for physical and mental peace and prosperity of the gross and subtle bodies of their friends and relatives. Though Śrī Nanda Maharaja worshipped Indra to get food for his cows, the main aim of that worship was to provide happiness to Kṛṣṇa, as the cows are the instruments of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service Therefore, his worship of Indra was also Kṛṣṇa's worship, but in the future people would have misinterpreted this worship and engaged in improper worship of the demigods. Hence Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa forbade Śrī Nanda Maharaj to worship Indra and asked him to worship Giriraj Govardhan instead, using all the paraphernalia of the Indra Worship.

Poochari ke Lauta:

The cave of Śrī Raghav Pandit is to the north side of Govind Kunda and the temple of Śrī Narshinga dev Ji is in the north-east quarter. In the west of the cave there is Poochari ke lauta. One mile north of Poochhari above Śrī Giriraj Ji is situated the temple of Dauji. Śrī Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhan at this place and at that time the Sakhas had also supported with their Lathis (sticks) lest Giriraj should fall from His hand. In front of the cave is the crown sign of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Some say that the tongue of Giriraj Ji is in Śrī Rādhā Kunda and Mukharvind i.e. ending in Poochhari.

Gwal Pukur or Gwal Kunda:

It is said that here the sakhas snatched away the items for Sun worship from Madhu Mangal.

3 Camp: Śrī Barsana

(26 ashwini 13 oct 1989 Saturday)

Some devotees took luggage and trucks from the Govardhan camp in order to reach Barsana in the morning. There they made arrangement in three Dharamshalas (guest houses) for accomodating the pilgrims. The renounced devotees and parikramakari pilgrims set out from Govardhan by reserve buses at 8.30 a.m. and visited Paith Dham, Aentha kadamb etc., reaching Barsana after

noon. At first the pilgrims had to face some inconvenience as not enough rooms were available but later proper arrangements were made in the three Dharamshalas. Some students were staying in one of these Dharamshalas so the pilgrims only got rooms after some time. As the rooms were dirty it took time in cleaning them. Some pilgrims, seeing no alternative, made their own arrangements for accomodation.

Paeth Dhaam:

(**Parāsauli-grāma**:*This 'Parasaoli' word has come from the deviation of two words : Para and rasa-sthali. Parasaoli village is to the east of Chandra sarovar. The road between Chandra sarovar and Parasaoli village is very small. During Muslim rule, the name of this place was Muhammadpur. As the devotees were traveling by bus, they could not visit Chandra sarovar and Parasaoli but they all paid obeisances from a distance*)

The importance of this place is described in Śrī Braj Mandal Parikrama book. According to the description of Śrī Bhakti Ratnakar; Śrī Kṛṣṇa had performed rasa pastimes in Parasaoli village in the spring season and after the excitement of the Rasa took rest at the bank of Chandrasarovar.

Śrī Rādhā and her Sakhis had contributed in this Rasa. After Kṛṣṇa's disappearance from the Rasa-dance the Gopis searched for Kṛṣṇa and finally reached Him in a cave at Govardhan. Śrī Kṛṣṇa was sitting in the four-armed form so as to meet Rādhārāṇī alone, as when the Gopis saw him in the four-armed form, they thought that He was not their Kṛṣṇa. Thus they saluted Him as Lord Narayan from a distance and went away. But when Srimati Rādhārāṇī reached there, Śrī Kṛṣṇa could not preserve his four-armed form. Due to the intensity of Śrī Rādhāji's love, Śrī Hari's exhibition of affluence was defeated. He was compelled to show His sweet transcendental new Madan form before Sri Rādhā. This has been described in the 'Ujjaval Nilmani' by Śrī Rupa Goswami.

bhujchatustayam kvapi narmana darshyannapi vrindavaneshvari premna dvibhujah kriyate harih tasarambhvidho niliya vasata kunje mrgaksh ganderdrstam gopyitum samudvaradhiya ya susthu sandrshita

rādhāyah pradayasya hant mahima yasya triya rakshitum sa sakya prabhvishnunaapi harina nasichturvahuta

When Śrī Hari showed his four armed (Chaturbhuj) form with the pretension of play, Śrī Rādhāji's love made him two handed. In the beginning of Rasa lila Śrī Kṛṣṇa hid himself in a cave situated in Govardhan and eagerly showed His four-armed form to hide His aim from the Gopis. In spite of being the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa could not maintain his form before Rādhā's love. Oh! Such is the intensity of Rādhā's love. Two arms entered (paeth) into Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body so this village was named Paeth Gram (village).

dekh paeth-name gram atisusobhita / paeth naam hael yeche kahiye kinchit// rase krita antardhyan haela aei vane/ kṛṣṇae anveshan kari fire gopigane// chaturbhuj haeya kṛṣṇa sakshat hail / rai dhriste dui bhuj dehe praveshil // dehe paete dvibhuj-ae kotuk apaar / aei haetu paethnam lokete prachar //

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5.624-626)

Mr. Graus has written about Paeth Gram in his Mathura book. It is known from that book that an ancient temple of the four-armed Narayan in Paeth Gram had been destroyed by Aurangzeb. Mr. Graus also describes a cave, which was closed after some time due to the fear of snakes. Paeth Gram is at a distance of six miles from Govardhan. While entering Paeth Gram, a big and deep pond can be seen, which is famously known as Narayansara or Narayan sarovar. On the west bank of the sarovar there is a temple of Chaturbhuj Narayan. This temple is built above the cave.

Aintha Kadamb:

After Nanda Maharaj and the Gopas followed Śrī Kṛṣṇa's suggestion to worship Giriraj Govardhan, utilising the articles meant for Indra's yajna, Devraj Indra became angry and caused heavy rain to fall. Then the Brajbasi's took the shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is said that at that time Śrī Kṛṣṇa discussed with his sakhas how to save the Brajbasis from the anger and destruction of Indra. The sakhas thought that it was improper and impossible for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's very soft hands to lift Govardhan hill and so they prevented Him from doing such work. But even at the denial of the sakhas, Śrī Kṛṣṇa again and again wished to lift Govardhan. At this the sakhas showed him a Kadamb tree standing there and said if He was able to crush that Kadamb tree they would believe that He would be able to lift Govardhan and then they would allow it. Hearing this Śrī Kṛṣṇa immediately crushed the Kadamb tree and upon seeing this, the Sakhas believed that Śrī Kṛṣṇa could lift Govardhan. Then they dressed Śrī Kṛṣṇa as wrestler, bound a belt around his waist and allowed him to lift Govardhan. Since then the Kadamb tree became famous as Aintha Kadamb and the place as Paeth.

14 oct. Sunday:

The parikrama devotees under the guidance of respected Vaishnavas set out from the centrally located beautiful dharmshala in Śrī Barsana at 7 a.m. (where arrangements for regular worship and prasad were being made). They went in Sankirtan processing to Vrishbhānu Kunda, Sankarikhor, Viharvan, Gaehvarvan, Mayurkuti, Dangarh, Mangarh, Jaipur Maharajji's temple, Śrī Jiva temple, Makhura temple, the temple of Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī's father Śrī VrishbhānuRaj, Mother Kirtika and brother and the temple of the eight sakhis. After darshan, they returned to the dharmshala at noon.

Barsana is one of the three main hills of Braja. The other two hills being Govardhan and Nandeshwar. Govardhan as the Nandeshwar Rudra of Vishnu and Barsana as the Tanu form of Brahmaji are famous. Śrī Barsana is the capital of Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī's father Vrishbhānu Maharaj. The hills and trees of of Barsana are very beautiful. The other name of Barsana is Vrishbhānupur. Barsana is one of the 24 Upavans.

Vrishbhānu Kunda:

Local Brajbasis say that Rādhārāṇī's father Vrishbhānu and mother Kirtika used to take bath here.

Sankarikhor, Dangesh, Mangesh, Viasgarh, Gaehvarvan

vrishbhānu ae – varshan nam kaya / parvat samipe vrishbhānur alaya // apurva parvat aetha vrijendra kumar / karilen danlila anya aagochar // aeirvane radhikar man bhang hael / aetha kṛṣṇa vividh vilasematt hael//

parvatdvyaer madhyae ae sankerna pathe / ye kotuk taha keh na pare kahite // aebe ae sanrervare nam sabe kay / dan, man vilas parvat gadhntrya //

ahe shrinivas, shriradhika sakhisane/ balyavesh nana khelila aekhane//

ki balib – ae tamalkunje sakhigan / karail chale rādhākrishner milan// chiksholi gram – purve aei chitrashali / aetha rai vichitra veshet daksha aali // parvat gahire dekh nivid kanan /

aeve loke kahe aei gaevahar van // aeshitala kund suvestita vrakshgana / dekhah dohini kund aetha godihan // dabhararo gram aei kṛṣṇaer aekhane / bharil nayane ashru radhika darshane// dabhararo artha ashruyukta naetre kaya / aeve loke prasidha dabharo nam haya// dekh mukta kund aetha radhika sundari / muktaksheta kaela kṛṣṇa sah vad kari//

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5.890-895,907-913)

Sankarikhor:

Here Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his sakhas blocked the way of Śrī Rādhā and her Sakhis and said that they would let them through if they would give curd. At this a fierce love battle started between the two parties. When the Gopis would not give any curd, Śrī Kṛṣṇa snatched it all from them. This Dadhi Lundal (curd snatching) pastime took place at this place on Bhadra Shukla Trayodasi (thirteenth day of dark moon of the Bhadra month).

Dangarh:

Here Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed the pastime of begging from Srimati Rādhārāṇī.

Mangarh:

It is said that here Rādhā Ji was angry (mana) with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Here is Man Mandir

Vilasgarh

This is a place where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa used to wander.

Mayur Kuti

Here peacocks surrounded Śrī Rādhā and danced spreading their wings

(feathers).

Mukta Kunda or Ratna Kunda

Conflicting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa , Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī did the farming of Muktas in this village. Here Horangaleela (the sport of Holy) is organized during Phalgun Shuklasthmi and navmi and programs are organized from Bhadra Shuklashthmi to Purnima to celebrate the birthday of Sriji (Radhika).

28th Ashwin 15 oct Monday

Parikramakari devotees left their places of stay in Barsana while performing Sankirtan and went to Alta Pahari, Deh Kunda , Uncha Gaon (Lalita sakhi's place), Śrī Baldev temple served by Śrī Narayan Bhatt, Pilukhor, Pilu sarovar etc. and after Darshan returned to Dharamshala at 12 pm.

Alta Pahari

The way to Alta Pahari is full of thorns. One has to walk carefully. Rasajnya devotees say that here Śrī Kṛṣṇa used to colour Śrī Rādhāji's lotus feet in beautiful alta (red colour) juice and let her wear anklets. Local Brajbasis say that one of Rādhārāṇī's sakhis had made Alta mear (colour) on Her feet, so this place was known as Alta Pahari. After climbing a little, all sat on the high and low places of Pahari. Directed by Brajbasi Pandas as Alta Pahari, the red glow can be seen even now. All touched this alta that had been touched by the lotus feet of Rādhārāṇī and put it on their foreheads.

Deh Kunda (dehi Kunda)

Brajbasis say that one day Śrī Kṛṣṇa assumed the form of a Brahmin Priest and went to Rādhārāṇī to beg money. As Rādhārāṇī had no money but did not want to send the Brahmin away without offering something, she donated her body to the Brahmin. When the Brahmin was ready to take Rādhārāṇī away, Rādhārāṇī's parents were highly worried and anxious and they asked the Brahmin to leave Rādhārāṇī. The Brahmin said that if they donated gold equal to the weight of Rādhārāṇī, he would leave her. At this Rādhārāṇī's parents donated gold equal to Rādhārāṇī's weight and got her back. This place is where Rādhārāṇī had donated her body Śrī Kṛṣṇa so it is known as Deh Kunda. The sign of Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet can be seen on the ghat of Deh Kunda.

Uncha Gaon (village)

It is situated in the north-west quarter of Barsana. This is the place of Lalita sakhi. Srila Bhakti Vinod Thakurji has introduced himself as an unqualified maid of Lalita Sakhi. Lalita and other Sakhis are expansions of Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī. Lalita Sakhi is the foremost among the eight beloved sakhis namely Lalita, Vishakha, Chitra, Indulekha, Champaklataa, Rangdevi, Tungvidhya, and Sudevi. Among the followers of Lalita Sakhi , Rupa Manjari is topmost and Śrī Rupānuga (the followers of Śrī Rupa) are best. Śrī Bhakti Vinod Thakurji, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakurji have called themselves the followers of Sri Rupa and provided Rupānuga Bhakti with this introduction so Lalita Sakhi's place is life inspiring for Saraswat Gaudiya Vaishnavas. Śrī Swananda kunj of Rādhā Kunda where Srila Bhakti Vinod Thakurji had shown the ideal of Bhajan, is Lalita Sakhi 's kunj. This is written in the Brahma Vaivarta Purana. Lalita and the other Gopis have appeared from the bodily pores of of Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī in the rasa-circle of Goloka. Here according to the desire of Śrī Bhakti Pramod Puri Goswami, the song 'śrī RādhāKṛṣṇa padkamle man ke mane labhibo…', composed by Srila Bhakti Vinod Thakurji was recited. Lalita Sakhi's temple is at

some height, one having to climb about forty stairs to reach the temple. The deities of Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Lalita Devi are seated inside the Mandir. Devotees, following respected Śrīmad Puri Maharaj and other Maharajas, performed Parikrama of Śrī Mandir. After this, on following Vaishnavas, all paid prostrated obeisances and requested the favour of Lalita Sakhi. Grihasta devotees offered donations according to their Capacity.

Śrī Balarama temple

Śrī Balarama temple is situated to the east of Uncha Gram. The deities Revati and Balarama are situated in the temple. It is said that the Deity of Śrī Balaramaji has itself appeared from the earth. It is served by south Indian Narayan Bhatt. The Samadhi place of Śrī Narayan Bhatt is at some distance.

Pilu Khor:

aei pilukhor-aetha piluphal chale / sarvisah raskanukrida kutuhale //
'bhānurvor' 'pilukhor' aeve loke kaya / bhānu-pilu-sarovar purve nam haya //

(Bhakti Ratnakara 5.917-918)

Pilu Sarovar is in the north of Barsana. Here Rādhā Kṛṣṇa had met with the pretense of eating the Pilu Fruit. Brajbasi's say that here Rādhārāṇī had washed Her henna coloured hand but the henna had been decorated in Rādhārāṇī's palm by Mother Yasoda. As the Henna hands were washed in it, Pilu Sarovar assumed the color of Turmeric. Later on Rādhārāṇī thought that propagation of this news would not be good so She cursed the Sarovar and it remained water less for a long time. After this many yajna's were performed to fill the Sarovar with water. So with the blessings of Rādhārāṇī the Sarovar was full again.

3 Camp: Sri Nandagrama

Nandagrama 29 Ashwin 16th oct. Tuesday

On this day some devotees of the Math took kitchen materials and luggage in Matador to Nandagrama to make arrangements for cooking in the Bhajana Kutir of Sanatan Goswami. Arrangements for staying were made in an inter college established by Śri Śrīmad Bhakti Hridaya Ban Maharaj at the bank of Pavan Sarovar in Nandagrama, the devotees' luggage having been sent in a truck from Barsana. Devotees, following the saintly leaders, set out from Barsana at 7.45 am and reached Nandagrama Inter college at noon. On the way they visited the Gopal temple, Prem Sarovar, Sanket temple of Nimbark Sampradaya, Sanket temple established by Srila Prabhupad, Sanket Devi, Rasamanch, Jhoolan manch and the Bhajan Sthali of Śrī Gopal Bhatt.

Prem Sarovar Sanket Sthaan

Aei 'prem sarovar' dekh srinivas/ aetha prem vaechitya bhaver prakash Dekhah 'vihilkunda' Śrī Kṛṣṇa aethate /

haila vihila rainam shravanete// Ae 'sanket kunj' sakhi sanket kariya / rai kanu donhare anen yatna payiya//

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.921-923)

Prem Sarovar is an enlightenment of the strangeness element in the love of Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī. It is half a mile north of Barsana. This pastime is memorable only for some special persons. There are nine constructed banks around Prem Sarovar, eight Ghats for eight sakhis and one ghat for Rādhārāṇī. Sanket Bihari temple is nearby. Following the Vrajabasi pandas, devotees first reached the Sanket temple of the Nimbark Sampradaya. After visiting that temple, they came to Sanket Bihari's temple established by Śrīla Prabhupad. This is a Sanket (pointing) place of Purnamasi or Yogamaya for the meeting of Rādhārāṇī with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Here devotees saw Sanket Devi, Rasmanch, Jhoolan manch, the sitting place of Śrī Gauranga Mahaprabhuji and the Bhajan Sthali of Gopal Bhatt Goswami. Devotees took rest for some time and then reciting Kirtan on the way reached Nandagrama's Pavan Sarovar at noon.

Pavan Sarovar: Vishakha's father Pavan built this place, so this place is known as Pavan Sarovar. The Bhajan kutir of Sanatan Goswami is on the south bank of Pavan Sarovar. Here Sanatana Goswamiji, being restless in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's separation, fasted for three days in a nearby forest. Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa came there in the form of a little child of Vraja and gave him milk to drink and asked him to live in a hut. After this the Vrajabasis built a hut for him. According to some persons, this is where Rupa Goswami desired to make Kheer (a sweet rice and milk dish) for Sanatana and Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī Ji, assuming the form of a cowherd girl, came and brought ghee, milk, rice, sugar and other material used in Kheer.

All the devotees put the water of Pavan Sarovar on their forehead and while reciting Kirtan paid their obeisances at Goswamiji's Bhajan Sthali. Visiting the Samadhi temple of the materially desireless, unalloyed devotee Śri Śrīmad Kṛṣṇa Das Babaji Maharaja, beloved disciple of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, all felt ecstatic for some time. All paid their prostrated obeisances with devotion and those who had not taken bath, took bath at Pavan Sarovar. Devotees were given Mahaprasad in the clean premises of Inter college. After lunch, devotees took rest for three hours and in the evening they visited the temple of Nanda Yasoda Kṛṣṇa Balaramaji in Nandeshwar. The scenery of Nandeshwar is also very beautiful. One has to climb up several stairs to see the temple, which is very big and beautiful. Kṛṣṇa and Balarama are in middle of the

temple and Brajeshwar Nanda Maharaj and Brajswamini Yasoda Devi are on either side.

Dekhshri nivas 'nandisvar' nandalya / aetha gudh rupe ramKṛṣṇa vilasaya // Aei dekh nander vasati simasthana / nander bhavan-purve apurv udhan //

Yavat haite Śrī Radhika sakhi-sathe / nander alaya aisen aei aei pathe // Ahe sri nivas ae pavan sarovare /

snan kari krishne ye dekhye nandisvare // Srinand-yasodar karile dharshan/ sarvabhistha purna tar haya saei kshan //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.931,933-936)

pavane sarsi snatva Kṛṣṇam nandisvre giro / Drustva nandam yasodanch sarvabhistamapanuyat //

(Mathura mahatmya)

If after taking bath in Pavan Sarovar, one goes to visit Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Nanda Maharaj and Yasoda, ones desires get fulfilled. Though Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed several pastimes such as the killing of Putana, the killing of Sakatasura, the killing of Trinavrita, exhibiting the universe in his mouth to Yasoda, walking on His knees, different mischiefs like theft of butter with other Gopas, Damodar pastime, Yamla Arjun Bhanjan etc., in Gokul Mahavan, Nanda Maharaj and Yasoda due to parental affection thought that these things could not have been performed by the child Kṛṣṇa, but all these activities must have been performed by some demon, so after consulting Upnand, he decided to leave Gokul and go to Vrindavan. This is described in Srimad Bhagvatam. At that time he performed the pastime of residing in Nandagrama or Nandeshwar for some time.

Nandeshwar Mahadev is seated at the north of the big temple above Nandeshwar

hill. There is a footprint of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to the east of Panchari Kunda and in Nettar angle of parvat. There are footprints of Cows in the east. Mayur Kuthi is above the hill in Nooshaan angle, fairs being organized on Navami (ninth) of Kṛṣṇa Paksh of Bhadrasmas due to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmasthami and Dashmi Tithi of Phalgun month due to Holika. Devotees first climbed up and paid theie obeisances to Nandeshwar Mahadev and then paid prostrated obeisances in main temple and then recited Kirtan, performed the Parikrama of temple and danced before the Deities in the campus of the main temple. After Darshan of Nandeshwar, the devotees climbed down while reciting Sankirtan and visited Yasoda Kunda, Hau, Śrī Narsingha temple and Dadhi manthan Kupa(well). Finally after visiting the footprints of Yasoda and Kṛṣṇa on charan Pahari they returned to their place of stay at the Inter-college, by which time it had become night.

Yasoda Kunda

There are several Kundas around Nandeshwar. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has performed many pastimes in all these Kundas.

'dekh nandisvar-chaturdike kundvan / Kṛṣṇa vilaser sthan bhuvan-pavan //'

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.940)

One of these Kundas is Yasoda Kunda. Here Balaram and Kṛṣṇa played with their friends. There are three stone lion like statues above Yasoda Kunda. The Panda told the devotees that these statues were called Hau. Yasoda Ji used to bring Śrī Kṛṣṇa near these statues to make him fearful of Hau, so that the naughty Kṛṣṇa might be pacifed. There are six main Kundas around Nandeshwar:- Dhoyani Kunda (the pond created by washing of curd utensils), Lalita Kunda (where Lalita used to arrange meetings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with Rādhārāṇī), Surya Kunda (here the sun became restless due to seeing Kṛṣṇa),

Vishakha Kunda (another meeting place of Rai Kanu or Rādhā Kṛṣṇa) and Paurnamasi Kunda (where Paurnamasi used to live in a hut made of leaves).

Śrī Narasimha temple

This is an ancient temple, said to have been established by Nanda Maharaj. There are seated deities of Varaha Dev, Kṛṣṇa, and Gaur Nityanandaji.

Dahi Manthan Koop

Vrajabasis say that curd was churned at this place. This Manthan (churning) place is like a deep pit. So it is called Dahi Manthan Koop. Some devotees did not enter there due to the foul smell but those who were devotional touched Dahi Manthan Koop and gave some donation. Every thing is worth seeing with pure loving eyes in Vraja. After this, it being dark, devotees went to Charan Pahari and touched the footprints of Kṛṣṇa and Nandrani, paying their obeisances.

Second day of stay in NandaGram 17th oct

On this day the Parikramakari devotees set off at 7 am and while performing sankirtan visited the Bhajan Sthali of Śrī Rupa Goswami and Kadamb Khuri (Teri Kadamb) followed by Yavat where they saw Kishori Kunda, Ayan Ghosh’s house, Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa inside Śrī Mandir, and Deities of Jatila, Kutila and Ayan Ghosh. They also saw the footprints of Rādhārāṇī on the roof of a house joined to Śrī Mandir. Parikramakari devotees were shown Kokilavan situated some distance away.

Bhajan Sthali of Śrī Rupa Goswami (Teri Kadamb)

Śrīla Rupa Goswami is nondifferent from Śrī Rupa Manjari the topmost maid servitor of Lalita Sakhi, who is the topmost sakhi of Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī. Srila Narottama das Thakurji has described the lotus feet of Rupa Goswami as everything. The founder of Sri Chaitanya Math and Sri Gaudiya Math, Nityalila Pravistha Om Vishnupad Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has introduced himself as the follower of Rupa Goswami and wished to become the dust of the lotus feet of Rupa Goswami. So the Bhajan Sthalis of Rupa Goswami are the life inspiring places for Saraswat Gaudiya Vaishnavas. They are excellent and most worshipable. Rupa Goswami performed Bhajana with high renunciation in Teri Kadamb near Nandeshwar. This place is highly lonely even now and it is very beautiful in the opinion of people who have faith in Bhajana. For those who are desirous to devote themselves in Bhajana, it is a proper place to get entrance into the secret service of Śrī Rādhā Govindji. At this highly pious place, Srila Rupa Goswami used to support himself by Madhukari Biksha Vriti (begging), and once when he wished to make kheer prasad for Srila Sanatana Goswami, Rādhārāṇī herself came as a cowherd girl and provided milk, rice, sugar and other materials for preparing the Kheer. After tasting the unique Kheer Prasad prepared by Rupa Goswami using those materials, Sanatana Goswami became surprised and full of love. When Śrī Rupa Goswami told him that the material to prepare the Kheer was given by a cowgerd girl, Sanatana Goswami understood that the girl was none other than Rādhārāṇī herself. Realising this, Sanatana Goswami was sad that Rādhārāṇī had to suffer for him, so he forbade Rupa Goswami from preparing Kheer again. There is a Kunda at the Bhajan Sthali of Rupa Goswami, which is named Mayur Kunda in the Gaudiya Vaishnav Abhidam.

Yavat

This is the house of Rādhārāṇī’s father in law.

Aei pathe sri Radhika pitar ghar haite / yavat grame te jaan svsuralyete //

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.929)

In his Gitamala, Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur has written praying for the desire of his heart

dekhite dekhite, bhulibo vā kabe,nija-sthūla-paricoya nayane heribo, braja-pura-śobhā,nitya cid-ānanda-moya bṛṣabhānu-pure, janama loibo,yāvaṭe vivāha ha'be braja-gopī-bhāva, hoibe swabhāva,āno-bhāva nā rohibe

Śrī Vraja Mandal is a transcendental spiritual place. The beauty of Vraja can be felt in the pure loving role. People desirous of lust cannot accept these truths. Birth in Vrishabhānupur, marriage in Yavat, knowing the real identity as a cowherd girl, getting of pure Name etc. are the highest pitch of love. Love for Kṛṣṇa can only be received by the favour of Rādhārāṇī. Vrishbhānu, Chandrabhānu, Ratnabhānu, Shubhānu and Sribhānu are five brothers, Vrishbhānu being Rādhā's father and Chandrabhānu being Chandravali's father. Hence Chandravali is the elder cousin of Radhika. Ayan Ghosh (Abhimanyu) of Yavat is Rādhārāṇī's husband and Govardhan Mall (Govardhan Gop) is Chandravali's husband. Chandravali and Sebya, are described as being unfavourable to the ashraya(shelter or repository of rati ie Śrīmati Rādhārani), and Abhimanyu, Govardhan Gop etc. are unfavourable to vishaya (the subject of rati, ie Sri Krsna). These are unmanifested pastimes, present only in the form of emotions (Bhava Rupa). Characters of both categories enhance the pleasure of Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa's conjugal pastimes in an indirect or contrary (vyatireka) way. The characters who are unfavourable to the subject(vishaya), also increase the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa indirectly, and the characters who are unfavourable to the shelter(ashraya), also increase the pleasure of Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī and her companions in an indirect (vyatireka) way. So companions of Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī do not desire Brajendranandana Kṛṣṇa himself or Vraja directly, as this would mean leaving the service of Śrī Rādhā Ji and Her inseparable Rādhā Kunda. It is

the only duty of Gaudiya Vaishnavas to follow the followers of Srila Rupa Goswami, inhabitants of the bank of Rādhā Kunda. Hence Śrī Rupanuga Gaudiya Vaishnavas cannot visit Sakhi Sthali, the place of Candravali. Śrī Das Goswami Prabhu was once given butter-milk in a palas patra (leaf) brought from Sakhi Sthali. When he came to know that this carrying plate (Dona) was made from the tree at Sakhi Sthali, he threw it away.

-Srila Bhakti Siddhant Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad.

The popular name of Yavat is Jau Gram. The contrary (vyatireka) position of Abhimanyu, his mother Jatila, and sister Kutila, Mookhara etc. are only to enhance the pleasure of conjugal pastimes of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa.

ahe sri nivas aar aei samya sthan aei dekh Yaogram 'yavat' aakhyan yavat-gramete vilaser sthan yat / Se ati ashcharya taha ke kahibe kat // Dekh abhimanyur alaya aeikhane / aetha vilasaye rai sakhigan sane// Abhimanyu sriyogmayar prabhavete / Radhika ka katha dhvyanpay sparshite//

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.1069-72)

Śrī Kishori Kunda

This is Rādhārāṇī's favorite Kunda.

kokila van Kṛṣṇa mahakotuki parmanad / Kokila sobhagya hetu se sabde milaya // Yavater paschim ae van manohar / laksha laksha kokile kuhare nirantar// Aek din Kṛṣṇa aei vanete aasiya / kokil sadrsh sabd kare harsh haya // Sakal kokil haite sabd sumadhur / ye sune varek tar dherya yay dur // Jatila kahe vishakhare

priyavani /

kokiler sabd aeche kabhu nahi suni // Viśākhā kahaye-aei mo sabhar mane / yadi kah ae kokile dekhi giya bane// Vridha kahe-yaao suni ulaas asesh/ rai sakhis ah vane karil pravesh//

Hel mahakotuk sukher sima nai/ sakle aasiya milila aeka thain// Kokiler sabde Kṛṣṇa mile radhikare/ ahetu kokila van kahaye ihare//

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.1160-1168)

Third day of stay in Nandagrama: 18th oct 1984 Thursday

(Rādhā Kunda appearance day)

On this day Parikrama of Khadir Vana was performed. Of the twelve forests, or vans, seven are situated on western side of Yamuna, and of these seven forests the sixth one is Khadir Van. The popular name of Khadir Van is Khadir or Khayara and it is in the south east of Nandagrama. In this van, Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed the pastimes of herding the cows with His friends. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also killed Vakasur in this forest. The short description of this pastime is as follows :

One day Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarama had been wandering with the calves and cowherd boys, and at the time of cowherding reached a pond. The boys and calves felt thirsty so they began to drink the water of that pond. Then a fierce creature named Vakasura, sent by Kamsa, came there. Seeing him, all were frightened. Vakasura was in the form of a crane and in a second he opened his mouth before the cowherd boys and swallowed Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Seeing this fierce scene Baladeva and the boys became lifeless. When the remover of the sorrow of devotees, Sri Kṛṣṇa reached under the palate of Vakasura, he began to burn his palate. Being restless, the crane vomited and threw Kṛṣṇa outside. But when he came again to swallow Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tore both his beaks and killed him. Until the Vakasura situated in the heart of every living being is killed, Kṛṣṇa and devotion to Kṛṣṇa cannot be achieved. Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur has said that

Vakasura symbolises vice and knavery. Vice and knavery are hindrances on the way to achieving Kṛṣṇa.

Devotees set out from their lodgings in Nandagrama in the morning while reciting sankirtan and returned at 2 pm, after visiting Uddhava Kyari, Khayara (Khadir Vana), the Bhajan Sthali of Śrī Lokanath Goswamiji, Kishori Kunda etc. As the place was a long distance away, some people used horse-cart (Tanga), and on the way back many were unable to walk so returned by tractor.

Uddhava Kyari

At this place, Sri Uddhava Maharaj saw the unique prema-vikara (the symptoms of ecstacy in transcendental love) of the cowherd damsels due to separation from Kṛṣṇa and thought himself highly fortunate. Another name of Uddhava Kyari is Udho Kriya. Śrī Narahari Chakreshwar Thakurji, in Bhakti Ratnakar Granth, has described the importance of this place.

'udho-kriya' sthan aei udhav hethaya / Gopi-kriya dekhi dhanya mane aap nay//
Aei thanya Uddhav nandadi prabodhila/ dekhiya adbhut bhav adherya haila //
Kathodin Uddhav chilen aei khane/ sab karya sidhhaya ae sthan darshane//

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.1039-41)

Śrī Uddhava Maharaj Ji was a favorite friend of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, disciple of Brihaspati and respected minister of the descendent of the Vrishnis. Uddhava is the best of the Yadavas. How much Śrī Kṛṣṇa loved Uddhava, can be known by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's speech –

na tathā me priyatama ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr naivātmā ca yathā bhavān

- Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.15) “My dear Uddhava, neither Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, the goddess of fortune nor indeed My own self are as dear to Me as you are.”

.”Uddhava is most loving to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” Hearing these words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava felt proud. The destroyer of pride (Darpa-Hari) Madhusudan understood the feeling of Uddhava and asked Uddhava:- There are some devotees in Vraja who love me. My parents, the Gopas and Gopis are spending their days being highly sorrowful due to my separation. You should go there and console them by giving my message. Following Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s order, Uddhava traveled on chariot and reached Vraja at dusk. At that time in Vraja the cows were returning from the forest after grazing and dust was flying by their hoofs. As it was not clear due to the dust, the Gopas and Gopis could not see the Uddhava’s chariot. The Gopis were singing the songs of Rama-Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. At dusk, the light from the lamps, and the scenery of Vraja was looking marvellous. First Uddhava met Nanda Maharaj. Nanda Maharaj, thinking Uddhava non different from Vasudev, exhibited proper respect, worshipped him and fed him with satisfaction. When Uddhava sat on the bed for taking rest, Nanda Maharaj began to shed tears before Uddhava Ji and while describing his long time of sad feelings in separation of Kṛṣṇa. Nanda Maharaj Ji started asking ‘How is Vasudev, Devaki and his son ?. Does Śrī Kṛṣṇa remember his friends, Gokul Mahavan and Giriraj Govardhan ?. Śrī Kṛṣṇa had saved us from the Forest Fire, storms, rain and other disasters, and our hearts break as we remember his virtues. We become motionless when we see the places of his foot prints. Though Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were infants, they killed Kamsa, Chanur, Mustik and other great wrestlers. They killed the Kavlayapeed elephant and other demons. It appears that Sage Garga’s forecast is correct, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama have appeared Themselves’. Thus while describing various pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Nanda Maharaj’s throat choked. Being overwhelmed with the love for Krsna, milk began to flow from the breasts of Mother Yashoda and floods of tears shed from her eyes. Uddhava then joyfully addressed Nanda Mahārāja, having clearly seen the supreme loving attraction Nanda Maharaja and Yaśodā felt for Kṛṣṇa.

yuvāṁ ślāghyatamau nūnaṁ dehinām iha māna-da nārāyaṇe ’khila-gurau yat kṛtā matir īdṛśī

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.46.30

“O respectful Nanda, certainly you and mother Yaśodā are the most praiseworthy persons in the entire world, since you have developed such a loving attitude toward Lord Nārāyaṇa, the spiritual master of all living beings.”

While Uddhava and Nanda continued to speak about Krsna, the night ended. When the godly sun had risen, the people of Vraja noticed the golden chariot in front of Nanda Mahārāja’s doorway and were afraid Akrūra had arrived again.

When Uddhava appeared after finishing his early-morning duties, the Gopis first thought him to be Krsna as his form resembles that of Krsna. The young women of Vraja became astonished upon seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa’s servant, who had long arms, whose eyes resembled a newly grown lotus, who wore a yellow garment and a lotus garland, and whose lotuslike face glowed with brightly polished earrings. “Who is this handsome man?” the gopīs asked. “Where has he come from, and whom does he serve? Why is he wearing Kṛṣṇa’s clothes and ornaments!” It is not mentioned in Srimad Bhagvatam but devotees absorbed in meditation of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes express the feeling that when the Gopis told Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī about Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s arrival, She removed their misconception by telling them that he was not Kṛṣṇa, but that he was a good devotee of Kṛṣṇa. After the Gopis came to know that Uddhava was Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s messenger, they took him to a secluded place and sat encircling him. They began to speak and hear about Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The gopīs then began to remember the pastimes they had enjoyed with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and leaving aside all ordinary propriety and shyness, they wept loudly. Seeing the Gopis transformation in ecstasy of love (prema-vikara) in deep separation of Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava was astonished. Uddhava tried to console the Gopis, who were desirous of seeing Kṛṣṇa, in various ways. At last he said:

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām yā dustyajaṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā bhejur mukunda-padavīṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām

- Srimad Bhagavatam 10.47.61

The gopīs of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which one should search for by Vedic knowledge. Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers or herbs in Vṛndāvana, because the gopīs trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet.

Uddhava stayed in Vraja for some months, continuously praying to the dust particles of the feet of those women of Vraja, who have sacrificed themselves whole heartedly and whose singing of Krsna's pastimes can purify the three words (Tribhuvan). After that he took permission from Nanda and the Gopis and returned to Mathura taking gifts given by them.

Bhajan Sthali of Śrī Lokanath Goswami in Khayara

Śrī Lokanath Goswami, taking permission from Sriman Mahaprabhu, came for the first time to Vraja in the company of Śrī Bhugarbh Goswamiji and performed Bhajana Śrī Lokanath Goswami is Leela Manjari Sakhi in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes:

lokanathakhya goswami srilalila manjari pura

G.G.Dipika-87

His father was Śrī Padmanath Chakravarty and his mother was Śrīmati Sita Devi. In Sadhan Deepika, Śrī Bhugarbh Goswamiji is referred to as the uncle of Śrī Lokanath Goswami. The previous residence of Goswamiji was in Talkhari village of Yashohar District. Goswami performed bhajan with high renunciation and free of wordly desires. Being afraid of material expections, he decided not to take any disciple. But being melted by the excessive one pointed devotion of Narottam Thakur, he gave up his vow and gave initiation, but only to Narottam

Thakur. While traveling through Vrajamandal, he was attracted towards the beauty of Kishori Kunda situated in the village of Umrao of Kshtra-vana (situated in Khadir Van) and while living at the bank of Kishori Kunda he devoted himself to bhajan in seclusion. Here, the Deities of Śrī Rādhā Vinod appeared in a unique way. Śrī Lokanath Goswami deeeply desired to serve the Deities of Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa. Seeing his aspiration, the Lord Himself suddenly appeared and gave him the deities of Rādhā Vinod and then disappeared. Seeing the deities of Śrī Rādhā Vinod, Śrī Lokanath Goswamiji was astonished and with a disturbed heart, began to wonder who had come to give these deities. When he was thus thinking, the deities Themselves lovingly glanced at Śrī Lokanath Goswamiji and laughingly said, "I live at the bank of Kishori Kunda of Umrao Gram. Seeing your restlessness I myself have come to you. Who else could bring me to you? I am very hungry, give me some food." Hearing this fascinating voice of Śrī Rādhā Vinod, tears rolled from the wet eyes of Śrī Lokanath Goswami. He immediately cooked food and made Śrī Rādhā Vinod Ji eat. Śrī Rādhā Vinod Ji became the body, heart and soul of Śrī Lokanath Goswamiji. He dedicated himself completely to the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā Vinod Ji, keeping them in a bag, and he began to serve them.

Vrishbhānu kishorir priya atishaya / aei ye kishori Kund sada sobhamaya // Dekhi ae apurva van maha-harsha mane / loknath goswami chilen aei khane// Ye vairagya taanra-ta kahite ant nai / sriRādhāvinod kripa kael aei thani// Fal, mul, sak, ann yabe ye milaya / yatne taha sriRādhāvinod samarpaya// Varsa, sitadite aer vriksha tale vaas / sange jirna kaantha ati jirna vahivas//

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.1259-63)

The Parikramakari devotees following Param Pujyapada Śrīmad Puri Maharaj and other great Vaishnavas put the holy water of the Kunda on their forehead and went to the Bhajan Sthali of Śrī Lokanath Goswamiji where they paid their prostrated obeisances. The present caretaker of the above mentioned Bhajana Sthali, Śrī Madram Das Babaji Maharaj gave sweets and Madhukari Prasad to the Parikramakari devotees. The founder of Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Nitya Lila Pravistha Om 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharajji used to send money every month for the service of the Bhajan Sthalis of Goswamis.

After his disappearance, the monthly service started by him is continuously followed by the present Acharya Tridandiswami Śrīmad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj. He sends money to Śrī Rupa Goswami's Bhajana Sthali, Tairi Kadamb, NandaGram, Śrī Lokanath Goswami's Bhajan Sthali, Khandirvan (khayara), Chaturbhuj temple (Paeth) etc. Saints of Śrī Chaitanya Gaudiya Math provided some money to Babaji Maharaj for the renovation of Śrī Lokanath Goswami's Bhajana Sthali. It was seen that there were two more servants. According to the direction of Param Pujyapada Śrīmad Puri Goswami Maharaj Ji, Vaishnavas recited Kirtan of prayers composed by the great Vaishnava devotee Narottam Thakurji.

Fourth day of stay in Nandagram (2 kartik 19 October 1984 Friday).

On this day the Parikramakari devotees set out to perform Parikrama of Kamyavan, starting their journey by reserved buses at 7.30 am. Cooking utensils were also taken in a bus as per usual, but as Vimla Kunda was not a suitable place to stay only the Prasad arrangements were made there. The devotees reached Vimla Kunda where they set down the luggage and then they continued by bus to Charan Pahari to visit Krishna's footprints, Bhaomasur Cave, the place of eating (Bhojan Sthali), the place of Bhajan of Srila Probodhanan Saraswati Thakurji, Vrinda Devi, Kameshwar Shiva established by Vajranabh, Setubandh, Chaurasi Kambha, the exile place of the Pandavas, Govinda Gopinatha Madan Mohan Temples, Chipan chipai etc and then returned to Vimla Kunda. Here the devotees took Prasad at noontime and then rested by the bank of Vimla Kunda for some time. Vimla Kunda is in the area known as Kamyavan., which was called Brahma pur in Satyuga, Anangpura in Tretayuga, and became famous as Kamyavan in Dwaparayuga. The popular name of Kamyavan is Kamvan or Kamma. Śrī Kṛṣṇa lived here during His childhood. It comes under Bharatpur district and is seven miles west of Barsana. There are many monkeys at this place. All the devotees were afraid of them, and especially at lunchtime, they kept careful watch to make sure the monkeys did not snatch away their food. The water of Vimla Kunda is very clear. Later, at Kama city when the party went to visit the Vrinda Devi temple, an old woman of Agartala went missing. Forty local people tried to find her but she was nowhere to be seen. The Acharya of Śrī

Math was worried, and again sent some persons to search for her. All the devotees were sent back to Nandagrama by bus but he stayed there in Kamyavan waiting for that old lady. She finally returned to the lodgings in Nandagram at evening time, having walked all the eight miles on foot, after finding herself separated from the devotee party.The devotees were stunned but happy.

Śrīpad Bhakti Sundar Narasingha Maharaj Ji went to Srila Acharyadev by car and gave this good message to him. Sri Acharyadev called back all the devotees engaged in the search and returned to Nandagrama with them.

Vimla Kunda

Residence of Śrī Vimla Devi.

Ae vimal-kund-snane sarva pap yaya / aetha pran tyage vishnulok prapti haya// Vimal kundaer katha kaha nahi yaya / aetha srivimladevi rahen sadsaya //

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.845-47)

vimalasya ca kunḍe tu sarvaṁ papaṁ vimokṣyate yas tatra muñcati praṇan mama lokaṁ sa gacchati

-adi varahe

While performing the Parikrama of Vimla Kunda, devotees saw the temples of Vimla Devi, Nitai Gaur, Murli Manohar and the Deities of Vrajavihariji under it, the temples of Dauji and of Madan Gopal Ji. They also saw the Deities of Kṛṣṇa Balarama and Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Ji in temple of Vimal Vihariji. After climbing the stairs, they visited and touched the footprints of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Vaishnavas sat

on the high and low places of the hill and recited Kirtan.

sri charan chinha dekh parvat upare / - Bhaktiratnakar

Local Vrajabasis say thatduring their hide and seek game, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa used to disappear, and the Gopis became restless, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa used to climb up the hill and console them by showing Himself.

Cave of Vyomasura

chorya khelarsthan ae parvat vyomasure / badhila kotuke Kṛṣṇa aei gofa dvare //

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.881)

The story of Vyomasura is described in the 37th chapter of the 10th Canto of Śrīmad Bhagvatam. Vyomasura was the son of a demon named Maya and was sent to Vraja by Kamsa. Once, during cowherding, Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys were playing a game of acting as thieves, protectors and sheep, whereby the thieves tried to hide the stolen sheep. At that time Vyomasura came in the form of a cowherd boy and mingled with some of the boys who were acting as sheep. He carried them one by one into a cave and shut the mouth of the cave. Thus playing, there remained only four or five boys. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, protector of the devotees, came to know this, he spoiled the game and killed the Vyomasura demon and freed the cowherd boys. By killing Vyomasura, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has taught renunciation of the habit of theft and nature of cheating. As the cave of Vyomasura was high up the hill and the way was difficult, many devotees paid their obeisances from a distance, but some hardworking devotees visited that place. On the hill there are marks of ornaments of Dauji and the place where the demon was killed.

Bhojan Sthali

Aei kaam sarovar maha sukhmaya / kaam sarovare kaam sagar kahaya //

Dekhaya bhojana sthali Kṛṣṇa aeikhane / karilena bhojana kotuke sakhasane//

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.871,74)

After killing the Aghasura demon, Kṛṣṇa sat at the bank of a Sarovar (pond), to perform the pastime of eating with his friends. At that time, Lord Brahma, in order to test Kṛṣṇa, kidnapped some calves and boys and kept them in a cave of Sumaeru Mountain. So this pond is called Brahma Kunda. A place dug at the hill is called Bhojan Thali (Plate of food) by the residents of Vraja. Sri Acharyadev said that when he had come for Vrajamandal Parikrama on foot with Paramaradhya Srila Gurudevji, pujyapada Śrīmad Kṛṣṇadas Babaji Maharaj had danced in ecstacy due to being excited in Kirtan by the friendship mellow. Hearing his Kirtan at that time all the devotees felt ecstasy

The place of Bhajana of Srila Prabhodhananda Saraswati Thakur
Prabhodhananda Saraswati was the younger brother of Śrī Vainket Bhatt, the resident of Śrī Rangnath Dham in south India, and spiritual master and uncle of Śrī Gopal Bhatta Goswami. Formerly he used to worship Laxmi Narayan but later by the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, he became a devotee of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa. His writings, 'Rādhāras Sudhanidhi', 'Śrī Chaitanya Chandramrita' 'Śrī Vrindavan Mahimamriat' etc. are books which are life inspiring to devotees in madhura rasa. Devotees paid their obeisances at the Bhajan Sthali of Prabhodhananda Saraswati Ji and requested his favour.

Vrindavan Devi and Govind, Gopinath, MadanMohan

The Deities of Śrī Govindaji served by Rupa Goswami, Śrī Gopi Nathji served by Madhu Pandit, and Śrī Madan Mohan served by Sanatana Goswamiji, were the first to appear in the kingdom of Bharatpur. Later due to trouble at the time of Aurangzeb's empire when Hindu temples were being attacked, these Deities were sent to Jaipur. Being attracted by the love of the Maharaj of Jaipur's daughter, Madan Mohan Ji went to Karoli. Even today Rādhā Govindaji and Rādhā Gopinath Ji are in Jaipur, and Madan Mohanji is in Karoli. When the Deities came to Bharatpur, three temples were built in Kamyavan. Vrinda Devi was separately seated in a room of Govind ji's temple,. Local Pandas say that when Govindaji, Gopinathji and Madan Mohan went to Jaipur from Kamyavan, VrindaDevi did not wish to leave, so secondary Deities of Govinda, Gopinath and Madan Mohanji were installed – but Vrindadevi's deity is the original. Devotees also saw the temple of Śrī Rādhā Mohanji.

Kameshwar Shiva

Dekh maha tejomaya shiv kamaeshvar / garun aasan sthan atimanohar //

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.841)

It is said that if a person makes a wish at the place of Kameshwar Shiva, established by Vajranabh, his wish is fulfilled. Devotees, desiring auspiousness, do not pray for anything except the unalloyed devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa.

Setu Bandh (building the bridge at Rameshwar)

All holy places are present in their real form in Śrī Vraja Mandal, the abode of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Setu Bandh in Kamya- vana is where Śrī Kṛṣṇa and

his friends acted Lord Rama's pastime of building the bridge.

Aei saetubandha Kund ithe bahu katha / samundra bandhan lila kela Kṛṣṇa aetha //

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.851)

Chaurasi Khamba (84 pillars)

At the time of exile the Pandavas had stayed in Kamyavan. Formerly ancient deities of the Pandavas were here but they cannot be seen at present. However Chaurasi Khamba (84 pillars) from Dwapara Yuga can still be seen today. Local people say that by the desire of Yudhisthira Maharaj, Vishwakarma had built this assembly place. The speciality of this assembly place is whenever we count it, is the number is always different. Here one can see the seating place of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Local priests say that this is the place where, as related in the Mahabharat, Durvasa Rishi arrived with ten thousand disciples to visit Yudhisthira Maharaj after Draupadi had taken her meal. Kṛṣṇa arrived due to Draupadi's distress of not being able to cook for the rishi, and by eating the remaining particles from Draupadi's plate, Kṛṣṇa brought about the satisfaction of Durvasa Rishi and his disciples. The priests showed the place of Durvasa Rishi's bathing and offering oblation in Vimla Kunda although in Mahabharat description of Dev Nadi is found.

Dharma Kunda

Here Lord Narayan is seated in Dharma form. Vrajabasis say that this is where Yudhistira's father Dharmaraj assumed the form of Baka and Yaksha and questioned him. When Yudhisthira replied properly, his brothers were given their

life back. In original Mahabharat the place of this incident is considered to be Dvaita-vana. It had happened when the Pandavas, during their exile, had first come to Dvaitvan, then to Kamyavan and after that again to Dvaitvan. It appears that Dvaitvan is joined with Kamyavan so this description has been given.

Luklukani Michali Sthaan

aei 'luklukan-michali-sthan' haya / aetha RādhāKṛṣṇa vilas atisaya // Michlir artha-netra mudit aekhane / luklukani te sakha bade lukayane// Luklukani michali Kund susobhaya / ae ati nivid van andhkarmaya //

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.852-54)

Here Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa closed their eyes to play a hide and seek game with the Sakhis. This place is very dense and dark.

As devotees had not stayed at Vimla Kunda they could not go to all the visiting places of Kamyavan due to the shortage of time. Instead, all the places were remembered in their hearts. They recited in Kirtan the importance of Pichchal Pahari, Vishnu Singhasana etc.

Pichchal Pahari

chandrasen parvate ae pichlini shila / aetha sakhas aha Kṛṣṇa khele aei khela // Bhangite vasiya kharva parvat upare / pichali namye aeche punah punah kare //

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.867-868)

Vishnu Singhasana (Throne)

Aei kamyavane Kṛṣṇa lila manohar / karibe dharshan sthan Kund bahutar // Ahe sri nivas, dekh ‘visnusinghasan / sri charan kund’ aetha dhuil charan //

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.838-39)

Pandas described the many sided importance of Vishnu Singhasana. Śrī Bhakti Ratnakar describes many ponds, such as Śrī Charan Kunda, Dharma Kunda, Panch-Pandav Kunda, Vimla Kunda, Kamna Kunda, Setubandh Kunda, Kashi Kunda, Gaya Kunda, Prayag Kunda, Pushkar Kunda, Gomati-Dwarka Kunda, Tapa Kunda, Dhyan Kunda, Krida Kunda, Gopa Kunda, Ghoshrani Kunda, Vihil Kunda, Shyam Kunda, Lalita Kunda, Vishakha Kunda, Man Kunda, Mohini Kunda, Balabhadra Kunda, Surabhi Kunda, Chaturbhuj Kunda, Sanatana Kunda, Veda Kunda, Gandharva Kunda, Ayodhya Kunda, Sri Narasingha Kunda, Madhusudan Kunda, Rohini Kunda, Gopal Kunda, Devaki Kunda and Prahlad Kunda.

“dekhan prahaladkund laxmi kund aur / kamyavane yat tirtha lekha nai tar //”

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.882)

Pandas showed the devotees around some of the above mentioned Kundas. Generally, only a few Kundas such as Charan Kunda, Dharma Kunda, Pandav Kunda, Vimala Kunda, Setubandh Kunda, Kamana Kunda (where all desires are fulfilled), Surabhi Kunda (the place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa had played with cows and Gopabalas) and Gaya Kunda are visited. As already described, all places of pilgrimage are present in Śrī Vraja Mandal in their real form. Gaya Kunda is visibly Gaya Tirtha. Manikarnika mentioned in Bhakti Ratnakar was described by the Pandas as Mani Karnika Ghat situated on the bank of Gaya Kunda. There

is a temple near it and Śrī Vishvanathji, Gayaji Śrī Gadadhar and Laxmi Devi are nearby. The lotus feet of Gadadhar are at Gaya Tirth on the bank of the Phalgunadi in Bihar. There is a story about the Gadadhar name. It is written that in the time of Svayambhuv Manavatar, Hetiraksh worshipped Brahmaji and got the blessing of winning the three worlds and hence he instantly captured the heavens. The demigods were unable to bear the atrocities committed by Hetiraksh and so came to the shelter of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu said, “If I get the mahashastra (main weapon), I can kill him.” Then a Gada-like Vajra (club-like weapon) made of the bones of a Demon named Gada was given to Vishnuji. Vishnuji destroyed Hetiraksh by that Gada at this place, so Vishnuji was named Gadadhar. There is a demon named Gada who was destroyed by Goddess Parvati.

While travelling in Vraja on foot, a place called Gathuli Kunda may also be seen. It is written in Bhakti Ratnakar Granth about Gathuli Kunda.

Raghav pandit sri nivas prati kaya / kahiye gathuli gram naam yeche haya // Aetha holi kheli dohe vese singhasane /

sakhi dunhun vaster ganthi dila sangopane // Singhasan haite donhe uthila yakhan / dekhaye vasne ganthee haase sakhigan // Haila kotuk ati, dohe lajja paila /

faguaa laiya keh ganthi khuli dila// Ae hetu ganthuli ae gulal Kund jale / aeve fagu dekhe lok basanter kale //

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.798-802)

Fifth Destination:- GOKUL

Travel from Nandagram and Stay in Gokul Mahavan Math at night Kartik 20 Oct Saturday

The devotees traveled by bus starting at 7 am and reached Koshi by 9 am. They passed through small swirling rivers, drinking water wells, bricked houses, and tall trees. When they reached Koshi, they left the utensils and other things they had carried along in a place suitable for cooking. After which they proceeded towards Badi baithak, Chota baithak, Charan Pahari etc. had darshan and returned to Koshi by noon.

While the devotees took Prasad under the shades of trees in Koshi, they were reminded of the Braja Dham parikrama performed on foot. All felt satisfied by the Prasad. They rested for a while and started to Gokul Mahavan Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math. On their way, they visited Shergarh, Ramghat and other places.

On 20th oct, before they started from Nandagram, one lady, who was part of the Parikrama, left her body at the bank of Pavan Sarovar. Her daughter had accompanied her as well. Sri Krishna Ranjan Brahmachari and other servitors from the Math performed her funeral. It is the results of many pious deeds that one is fortunate enough to leave this body on the banks of Pavan Sarovar.

Bathan Gram (Badi Baithak and Choti Baithak)

"sripandit sri nivas narottame kaya / age aei dekhah ' bethan ' gram haya //
Yabe ye karye paramarsh gopagan / aeikhane aasiya vaisaye sarvajana //
Gopagana vaise-aei hetu ae bethan / abe loke kahe 'chote' 'bad' dui nam //
Brijwasi snehe badha haya harshamane / Sanatana Goswami chilen aeikhane //"

(Bhaktiratnakar 5.2339-42)

It is written in the Sri Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidan, that Badi Baithak is the place where Sri Krishna and Balaram would sit together and in Kuntal Kund in Choti

Baithak, Krishna would comb his hair along with his friends.

Charan Pahari (The foot hill)

It is near Bathak gram.

charan pahari aei parvater naam / aetha Krishna chander kotuk anupam //
Sakha-suveshtit Krishna chadiya parvate /go-gana crye dure dekhe charibhite //
Bhuvan mohan vaise bansi kare leya / dandail vrikshtale tribhang haiya //
Vamsivadharambh matre jagat matil / ye yatha chilaen sabe dhaiya aasil //
Vamsigan kshravane sthagit sabe haila / tulana ki gane? aei parvat dravila //
Vamsi dhvani suniya ye aila aethaya / ta savar pada chinha dekhah silaya //
Srikrishner padpadma chinha ae rahila / aei hetu 'charan Pahari' naam hael//

(Bhaktiratnakar 5/1391-97)

After Charan Pahari, the devotees reached the village, Haroyal. They visited the big temple and took rest in the Kund nearby. According to Bhakti Ratnakar Granth, the name of this Kund is Krishna Kund. Radha Rani once defeated Krishna in the Pasha game (game of dice) here in this village of Haroyal. Haroyal means defeat.

Shergarh Khelan Van

This is the playground of Sri Balaram and Krishna. Khelan (play) van is one of the twenty-four upvanas.

Dekhah ‘khelan van’ aitha dui bhai / sakha saha khele-bhakshner chesta nai // Mayar yatnete bhunje Krishna-balrama / ae kheln vaner sri kheln tirtha ‘ nam//

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1434-35)

Ram Ghat

ahe sri nivas! Aei ‘ram ghat’ hay / aetha raslila kare rohini tanaya // yatha krishna priyasah kel raskeli / tatha haete door ae ramer rassthali //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1436-37)

Ram Ghat comes under the Khelan van. Devotees paid obeisance to Sri Ram Ghat and sprinkled the holy water of Yamuna on their forehead. The panda (pilgrim guide) showed some ancient temples in Shergarh Dev Mandir, Yamaraj’s feet, Dadi Madan Mohan, Nanda Maharaj & Yashoda, Radha Gopinath, Radha ballabh, Shri Bajrangji, etc.

Stay in Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math in Gokul Mahavan: (4 kartik 21st oct 84 Sunday)

Starting at 7.30 am, Pujyapad Srimad Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Maharaj and other Vaishnavas led the devotees from the Math performing Kirtan. After walking for about 45 minutes, they reached the Brahmand Ghat on the banks of Yamuna.

Upon reaching, the devotees first took darshan of Brahmand Vihari Sri Gopalji and circumbulating the deity they performed loud and beautiful Kirtan. Many devotees bathed and performed ardhya tarpan (offering oblations). Prasad (Puri-sabji-halwa) brought from the Math was served for breakfast. All honored the Prasad with great satisfaction.

At Brahmand Ghat a unique species of tortoise can be seen, more so towards the east of Yamuna. Though the eyes of devotion see the beauty of the Bhagavat Dham, this place looks very beautiful to the mundane eye as well. Before the establishment of The Math in Gokul Mahavan, parikrama party used to stay in Dharamshalas and tents at Brahmand Ghat.

After lunch Prasadam, devotees visited Sri Bajrangji –the place of killing of Putana, place of the liberation of Yamularjuna trees, Nand Maharaj's water well, Nand Bhawan (house of Nanda Maharaj), Chaurasi Khamba (84 pillars), Garg Muni Dharmraj, Shabalasura and Trinavattasura vadh, Yogamaya dev, (Birth place of Sri Nandanandana Krishna) Dwarkadhish Mandir etc.

[While going between Nand Bhavan and Yamalarjuna Bhanjan, Brijwasi children assuming different forms of Krishna, sometimes as Vamsi etc., tried to attract the attention of devotees. Happy, the devotees would give them donations. It is an ancient custom]

Mahaprasad was served after the devotees returned. Arrangements for the stay of Sadhus and householder devotees made in both the rooms and tents within the compound of Gokul Mahavan Math, took their time and the devotees could not participate in the Parikrama in the evening. After the evening Aarti, the Sannyasis spoke Hari Katha in Bengali and Hindi in the assembly.

Mahavan

Mahavan is one of the twelve forests of Braja. Situated on the southwest of Yamuna, it is seven miles from Mathura. It's other name is Brihdavana (SB 10.11.21) or Ancient (purana) Gokul. This is the birthplace of Sri Nandnandan Krishna. Gokul comes under Gokul Mahavan and is one of the twenty-four forests. Together considered as one forest, Gokul-Mahavan is the place where he performed his childhood pastimes.

This is the biggest (brahad) of the forests, and famous as Brahad Vana. Suffering from the cruelties of the demons sent by Kamsa and lest the demons should increase the sufferings, Nanda Maharaj left Gokul and stayed in Nandagram. In Sri Bhakti Ratnakar Granth, Mahāvana has been described as the eighth Van.

Mahāvanaṁ caṣṭamaṁ tu sadaiva hi mama priyam tasmin gatva tu manuja indraloke mahīyate yamalarjuna-tīrthaṁ ca kunḍaṁ tatra ca vartate paryastaṁ yatra śakaṭaṁ bhinna-bhanḍa-kuṭī-ghatam

(Ādi-varāha Purāna, bhaktiratnakar 5.1767-68)

The eighth forest, which is called Mahavan, is My favourite. A person who goes there is worshiped even in Indraloka. Yamalārjuna- tirtha and Yamalārjuna-kuṇḍa is situated in this Mahāvana. At Yamalārjuna-tirtha, Krishna, in His Childhood, had broken the pots and pitchers of milk and curd and overturned a bullock cart.

dekh nand yasoda alay mahavane / aetha ye ye rang ta ke varnite jane // aei dekh sri krishna chandrer janmsthal / putramukh dekhi aetha nandadi vihil // vajra gop gopi dhai-aise aei angane / putra janmotsav haila aeikhane //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1714-16)

Brahmand Ghat

Sri Krishna displayed the childhood pastimes of eating mud in this place.

Seeing Krishna eat mud, first His cowherd friends and then Balaram complained to Mother Yasoda. Yasoda came running and enquired Krishna if he had eaten mud? Krishna denied at first, but later he opened his mouth and showed His mother the whole universe. Surprised, Yashoda saw herself, Nanda Maharaj, Giriraj Govardhan, river Yamuna etc in her son’s mouth. Seeing her emotions and lest her parental affection should shrink, Krishna quickly folded the universe form.

Krishna showed mother the Brahmand (whole universe) in His mouth. Therefore, this place is named Brahmand Ghat.

aetha krishna muktika bhakshan kel sukhe / vrijaswari bhraman dekhila krishna mukhe // aehetu ‘brahman ghat’ nam se ihar / dekh yamunar tir sobha chamatkar // yasoda anande vasi gopigan sane / dekhye putrer charu-sobha ae angane //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1746-48)

The place of killing of Putana (Putana khal)

It is said that Ratnavali, the daughter of Bali Maharaj, was born as Putana. When Vamandev, after his initiation (Upnayan Samskar) had come to beg Bali Maharaj at the place of sacrifice, Bhragukaccha, on the banks of Narmada River, all present there were attracted by the unique beauty and sweet voice of Vamandev. Seeing the Dwarf Vamandev, the daughter of Bali Maharaj, due to great parental affection desired to breast-feed Him.

Later, upon the request of Vamandev, Bali Maharaj promised three feet ground. But Vamandev assuming the Trivikrama form covered the three worlds with just two steps and the sky by his body. There was no ground for another step and as Bali Maharaj had failed to fulfill his promise, Vamandev bound him with Varun Pash. Bali Maharaj's daughter appeared angry instead of affection and desired to feed him poison instead of milk. Sri Vamandev, who fulfills the desires like a wish-fulfilling tree, fulfilled her desire in the pastimes of Krishna. Bali's daughter thus appeared as Putana.

In Sri Mathura Dham at Kamsa's prison, Lord Sri Krishna, as the eight child of Devki first appeared in the four-armed form and later upon the request of Vasudev-Devki assumed human-like two-armed form. After this Vasudev left Krishna in the house of Nand Maharaj and returned with Yogamaya. Hearing the cries of Yogamaya, the guards awoke, they went running and informed Kamsa, and Kamsa came and saw that Devki had given birth to a girl instead of a boy. Nevertheless, when Kamsa lifted and tried to kill the girl-child, she slipped away from his hands, assumed the form of eight-handed Yogamaya, and said, "O Kamsa one who will kill you, is already being brought up elsewhere." Frightened Kamsa, in order to get rid of his death, ordered Putana, sister of Vakasura to kill all the infants by feeding them poisonous milk. Upon Kamsa's order, Putana wandered the cities, districts, and villages, killing all the infants.

Hearing this story, Parikshit Maharaj was frightened. Sukdev Goswami consoled and told him that people, who listen to Krishna Katha, become fearless.

Putana reached Gokul by skyway at night and assuming the form of a very beautiful woman entered into the house of Nanda where Krishna was sleeping. By the influence of Supreme Lord's potency of pastimes, Yashoda Devi and Rohini Devi did not stop her. Putana, understanding the child form of Krishna as an ordinary child took him onto her lap lovingly. Seeing Putana, infant Krishna closed his eyes in fear. Seeing a very beautiful woman showing love to her son mother Yashoda Devi felt happy. Yashoda Devi and Rohini Devi could not

understand the evil intentions of the demon. However, the omniscient Lord angry at the pretension of childhood Lila caught the breast of the demon with his beautiful little hands. The demon forcefully dropped her poisonous breast in the mouth of the infant. Infant Krishna began to suck milk with such a great speed that the demon became restless and in terrible pain she tried to stop the infant and said, “You have fed much milk, now leave me”. But Krishna would not listen to her and while sucking her breast, He also sucked her life out. Putana making a loud noise assumed her demon form and fell on the ground on an area of 12 miles. Seeing such vast devilish form, cowherd men and women of Braja were horrified and surprised. Mother Yashoda fainted, but infant Krishna began playing on the breasts of Putana. When Gopis lifted Krishna from there and placed Him in the lap of mother Yashoda, her life returned.

Meanwhile, Nand Maharaj seeing some bad omen, took orders from Vasudev to return to Braja at the earliest. On his way, he first smelt the fragrance of sandal and then was surprised to see Putana demon. As Krishna had fed on her breast and killed Putana, her body smelt of attractive fragrance. A special virtue of Vishnu is that he is Hatarisugati dayak (He can bestow the eternal welfare even to the foes killed by Him). Putana, though she showed motherly affection with evil intentions, by the grace of Krishna she got the eternal place of a mother.

aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī lebhe gatiṁ dhātry-ucitāṁ tato ’nyaṁ kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇaṁ vrajema

Srimad Bhagavatam 3.2.23

The place, suppressed by the weight of Putana’s big body had turned into a pit. The place thus got its name ‘Putana Khal’.

Putana vadhila aetha vrijendra kumar / aeikhane agnikriya haila Putanar //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1730)

In Harivamsa Purana written by Krishna Dvaipayan Vedvyas Muniji, the story of the killing of Putana is different. The story in brief:

By the order of Kamsa, Putana came to Nandalaya in the form of an eagle at midnight. The residents of Braja were asleep. Putana, sitting on the milk cart and making a horrible sound showered stream of milk to feed infant Krishna.

Despite feeding infant Krishna for long, he would not die. Instead, Krishna gave a blow to her breasts and Putana crying in pain fell on to the ground dead. The horrible cry woke the residents. They were surprised to see the body of Putana demon and could not understand how she died or where she came from?

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur writes – “devotees will try to destroy their sinful conducts by hearing Sri Krishna’s pastimes of killing of demons. Only by removing unwanted things, one can achieve true love towards Sri Krishna. Putana represents the fake guru who teaches bhukti and mukti, material enjoyment and liberation. Devotees attached to bhukti and mukti are like Putana. Being merciful to the pure devotees, Krsna as a baby killed Putana to protect the devotees’ newly appearing affection for him.

The place of breaking o Yamalarjuna Trees

Rudra’s servitor, Kuber, had sons Nalakubera and Manigreeva who were intoxicated in ego of affluence and were wandering in a beautiful garden on the banks of Manasarovar (lake) at the Kailash Mountain. Drinking Varuni wine, they were in the naked form with women. Narada Muni, who used to wander according to his will, passed by. The brothers had lost so much knowledge under the influence of lust, that even after seeing Narada they did not leave their lustful

activities. Intoxicated in affluence, they disrespected Narada.

Poverty is a blessing for the person intoxicated in affluence. Mahabhagavat Narada Goswami with pity thought about the salvation of the Nalakuber and Manigreeva and cursed them to turn into trees. Though he cursed them, he granted them the memory of their previous sins so that they might not repeat it again. He also blessed them that after the completion of hundred years of Devaloka, (One day of the planet of demigod - equal to one year of the earth; one year of demigods – 36500 years of the earth) being devotees of Sri Krishna, they would get His company.

Even the anger of the Maha Bhagavat devotee can give immense benefit to the conditioned soul. Anger caused by the lust of the entrapped soul is inauspicious to living beings. Being full in love, devotees in order to bless the living beings, sometimes use anger for them. By the curse, or to say the blessing of Sage Narada, Nalakubera and Manigreeva were born as trees of Yamalarjuna in Gokul and got the divine association of Sri Krishna.

In childhood pastimes, Sri Krishna showed his naughtiness and used to go to the houses of cowherd women to steal butter with his associates. These cowherds complained to Nanda Maharaj and Yashoda. As Nanda Maharaj and Yashoda had deep love and affection for their son, they could not believe that their son could do such deeds.

One day, as the maids were absent in Nandalaya, Yashoda Devi herself was churning the yogurt. At that time, Krishna came repeatedly and insisted Yashoda to feed him. With affection, Yashoda took him onto her lap and began to feed him. While Mother Yashoda was feeding Krishna, she saw the milk boiling, and she took Krishna off her lap and went to put the pot down from the fire. As Krishna could not feed, he became angry, and in His anger, he broke the earthen pot of Yogurt, churning He began to destroy the yogurt, butter etc kept in different pots. Krishna was so angry that he stood on the mortar and destroyed

the pots hanging on strings with a stick. He ate the butter and fed the monkeys as well.

When Yashoda returned and found the pots broken, she took a stick in her hand and began to search for Gopal. Then she saw Gopal committing this mischief, standing on the mortar. In order to reform Gopal, Mother Yashoda hid the stick behind and reached the mortar very slowly. Sri Krishna, afraid of the beating, jumped from the mortar and ran away. Yashoda, having decided to punish Gopal began to run after Him. As Mother Yashoda was a little fat, she soon got tired of running. Attracted by pure affection of His Mother, Gopal slowed down his speed so that his mother could catch Him. If Lord does not allow to be caught, nobody can catch Him.

When Yashoda tried to scold and beat Krishna, He began to cry. From whom even Brahma, Shiva, and Yama are frightened, He was crying to see the stick in his Mother's hand. This is a unique miraculous pastime. Yashoda thought that the boy was very obstinate and that he deserved to be bound at home. When she started binding Gopal by the cord, the cord was short by two-finger length. Seeing this, mother was astonished, but did not leave the intentions of binding Him. She joined all the ropes in the house and made a longer rope, but she could not bind Gopal and began to sweat. Seeing the agony of Mother, Gopal accepted the bondage.

"Every time it was short by two inches", Srila Vishwanath Cakravarti Thakur has been explained in his commentary, - "If there is countless trial of devotees, and grace of Krishna, Krishna can be achieved".

Binding Krishna to the mortar, Mother Yashoda became busy in the household affairs. Sri Krishna, in order to make the words of Narada Goswami true and to liberate the two sons of Kubera, who had appeared as Yamalarjuna trees, began to pull the mortar and crawling on His palms, reached the two trees. After stepping between the two trees he pulled the mortar, fast enough to break the

trees. The trees broke making a great sound and both the sons of Kubera assuming a divine form, came out, and began to pray to Sri Krishna.

Other boys related this incident to Nanda Maharaj and Mother Yashoda. By the grace of Sage Narada, Nalakubera and Manigreeva were obliged to see Lord; they performed the circumbulation of Lord there and went to the north. As Nanda Maharaj had deep affection for his son he felt sad upon hearing the incident of binding Krishna. He himself unstrung the ropes around Krishna.

A stone mortar can be seen at Sri Yamalarjuna Bhanjan (breaking) place. Devotees danced joyfully at this place. Several devotees made some donations at the mortar. About the meaning of Yamalarjuna Bhanjan, Srila Bhakti Vinod Thakur writes - Proud, produced by the defect of intoxication and affluence has several defects such as violence, company of women and drinking of wine producing tongue slip, cruelty, violence and shamelessness. Such defects are removed by the grace of Krishna like the breaking of Yamalarjuna trees.

Nanda Kupa

After seeing Yamalarjuna, the devotees went towards Nanda Bhavan. There the Brijwasi Panda pointed towards a small well and said it is Nandakupa. Some devotees climbed on the mound and touched the well.

Nand Bhavan

Formerly there were 80 pillars in the house of Shri Nanda Maharaj. So it became famous as assikhamba but the new Nand Bhavan is known as ‘Chaurasi

Khamba'. Pandas of Gokul say that four pillars are symbol of Satya, Treta, Dwapar and Kali. They ask the common travelers to touch the four pillars and pronounce the words - Om, SitaRam, RadheShyam and Brahma, saying that it provides salvation.

One should give this subject a thought. First, the scriptures do not allow the pronouncement of 'Om' for everyone. The second thing is that symbol of Kali Yuga is not Brahma, but to call Gaura- Hari (Lord Chaitanya) is proper. It is unknown why they have done so? It appears that the four pillars are new. In, the middle of the main temple of Nanda Bhavan, there are big deities of Krishna-Balaram. On the left side, big deity of Nanda Maharaj and on the right side deity of Yashoda Devi is seated. Bal Gopal is seated in the lower swing. It is right that if one pays proper Pranami, they get a chance to swing.

The devotees danced and recited Kirtan for some time. Visiting many small temples, they reached a big temple of Yogamaya Devi. In this temple, Vasudev is seated on the left side and Rohini Devi onto the right. The devotees performed circumbulation of a pipal tree outside the temple. After this, they visited a temple to the south, where they saw the deities of Upananda, elder brother of Nanda Maharaj, Upananda's wife and Sri Krishna-Balaram deities.

[Upananda - Parjanya Gopa had five sons, named, Upananda, Abhinanda, Nanda, Sananda and Nandaan while Nanda Maharaj had no sons. So Parjanya Gopa performed penance. Satisfied, by his penance Sri Krishna had appeared as Nanda's sons]

After Nanda Bhavan, devotees visited smaller temples of Sakshi Gopal, Srila Sanatana Goswami's Bhajan Sthali; the deities of Yashoda Devi, Garg Rishi, Dharamraj , Lakshmi Narayan, Yamuna Ji, Vasudev, Dauji, scene of the killing of Trinavarta demon and Parjanya Gopa etc; then climbing the stairs, they reached the Yogamaya temple. This is Maha Yogapith, the appearance place of Nandnandan Sri Krishna.

Former Chairman of Gokul Mahavan municipal committee, Sri Hari Pathak, explained the importance of this place to common travelers and encouraged for the service of the temple.

Devotees on their way to Gokul Mahavan, visited Dwarkadish temple. Krishna performed the pastime of overturning the bullock cart and the killing of the Tranavarta demon in Gokul Mahavan.

The Overturning of the Bullock Cart (Shakat Bhanjan)

The seventh Chapter of the tenth canto of Srimad Bhagavatam describes Sri Krishna's Shakat Bhanjan pastime. Parikshit Maharaj persuaded Srila Sukdev Goswami to narrate the childhood pastimes of Sri Krishna.

Srila Sukdev Goswami: When Sri Krishna was just three months old, He tried to turn on to the side on His own. Nanda Maharaj and Yashoda Devi felt happy seeing this and they arranged a function of the direction change of their son and invited all the gopas and gopis.

[At the time of son's direction change, it is the duty of parents to perform auspicious activities of Abhishek (holy bathing) etc.]

On an auspicious day in the Rohini constellation, Yashoda Devi with other women performed her son's holy bath and other auspicious activities with accompaniments of songs and musical instruments and recitals of hymns by Brahmins. After the Holy bath, she worshipped the Brahmins with grains, good clothes, garlands etc.

After the ceremony, she put Krishna to sleep beneath a nearby Shakat (bull cart) so that she could attend to the guests.

Here Krishna began to move his hands and legs and started crying. However, all were busy in their activities and amidst the noise, Yashoda Devi could not hear the crying of the infant.

Infant Krishna hit the bull cart by his small and beautiful little feet. The bull cart turned over, the pots made of Gold, Silver, and copper filled with many juices came down and spread all round making a rumbling sound. The wheel and shaft of the cart broke down.

The sudden incident surprised all. Yashoda Devi, worrying Gopal's safety, began to weep. The strong gopas cleared the pots, and found Gopal to be in good condition.

The Brijwasis could not understand how the cart broke. The children narrated that Krishna struck the axis with his feet while weeping and broke the cart. Nevertheless, the Brijwasis because of pure affection did not believe the words of the children. They thought in their mind that this work must have been of some demon.

The story of Shakatasura Bhanjan is written in Brahmanda Purana composed by Krishna dvaipayan Vedavyasa. He writes that there was a demon beneath the Shakat and touched by Krishna's feet, Shakatasura Bhanjan took place.

Specialty of Sri Krishna's lila is that he enlightens his affluence keeping his sweetness intact. Though Krishna showed his affluence, the residents of Braja, in

sweet relation with Him, never understood Him as Lord. The servitors in the parental affection, Nanda Maharaj and Yashoda Devi always looked at Krishna as their son. About the meaning of Shakatasura Bhanjana, Srila Bhakti Vinod Thakur writes, child Krishna through Shakat Bhanjana has removed the heavy defects produced by pride, dullness and bad association.

The Killing of demon Trinavarta

Because of pure affection, Yashoda Devi, suspecting the ill effect of the planets on Krishna, made Brahmins perform auspicious acts and pacified the weeping child by feeding. In order to pacify the planets, Brahmins performed Yajna and prepared the curd mixed rice for worship and water with Kusha grass. The blessing of pure Brahmins never go fruitless. Therefore, Nanda Maharaj performed the holy Abhishek of Krishna and satisfied the Brahmins by offering them the best foodstuff. Thinking about the welfare of his son, Nanda Maharaj decorated the Brahmins with cloths, flowers, and garlands and donated the best of the cows to the Brahmins. Brahmins showered blessings on Child Krishna joyfully.

Once, when Krishna was just one-year-old, Yashoda Devi felt the weight of her son on her lap as a mountain and so put him down. Nobody could understand the reason for this weight. Remembering Narayan, they became busy in the household affairs. At that time Trinavarta demon, sent by Kamsa, attacked in the form of violent storm (cyclone) and lifting Krishna disappeared. Nobody could see or hear anything in the fierce storm. When the dust settled and Yashoda Devi could not find her son, she began to run here and there like a mad person. She fell on the ground like a cow whose calf is dead and began to wail and cry in loud voice – Gopal- Gopal. Her cry could melt even the wood and stones. Hearing the loud cry of Yashoda, Gopis came running. Unable to see Krishna, they also began to cry.

Krishna, to remove the sorrow of His devotees (that is Bhaktartihara) increasing his weight halted the great speed of Trinavarta. Trinavarta, suppressed by heavy weight, tried to separate himself from Krishna. Actually, Krishna had caught the demons' throat tight and squeezed the life out of Trinavarta. The demon's both eyes popped out and shouting in pain the demon fell down.

(The killing of Trinavarta: Because of hypocrisy, a person loves the ills - false pride of learning and wrong reasoning because of it, dullness, dull justice, and the company of a person who loves these ills. Bal Krishna being favorable to the humble devotees kills this demon.)

The weeping cowherds saw Trinavarta falling down. They were frightened and surprised. They saw child Krishna safe on the chest of the demon. Yashoda Devi and Nanda Maharaj and all the cowherds felt ecstatic. Cowherds began to discuss - surely, they must have worshipped Supreme Lord with full devotion or performed some good work that was beneficial to humankind that child Krishna, though fallen in the mouth of death, was saved. By this incident Yashoda Devi's fear and worry for her son increased and then on would hold the child on her lap all the time.

One day, immersed in son's love, Yashoda was feeding her son and was kissing the lotus mouth, full of light laughter. Then Sri Krishna looked at his mother and in order to remove the fear in her, said, "What do you understand about me, am I a human being? Who can kill me?"

Opening his mouth, he showed the universe to His mother. Yashoda Devi could see the sky, heaven, earth, sun, moon, planets, fire, air, ocean, islands, rivers, mountains, forests, and all static and movable creatures in Krishna's mouth. Though Krishna showed His form, mother Yashoda could not understand Krishna's lordliness and thinking it as a unique incident closed her eyes. She was surprised to think what she saw in Krishna's mouth. Krishna then folded His affluence form.

Krishna had shown the universe to Yashoda in His mouth at Brahmand Ghat, as already described.

Note: Devotees went to visit Ramanreti situated at Gokul Mahavan on 23rd Oct at noon.

Stay at Gokul Mahavan. (5 Kartik 22nd oct 1984 Monday):-

Today the devotees set out from Gokul Mahavan math by four buses at 7:30 am and visited the seventh van - Bhadra Van, eighth - Bhandir Van, tenth - Lohavan out of the twelve vanas. Also they visited the Matt Vana out of twenty-four forests and returned to the math at 1:30 pm. After taking Prasad, all were tired and could not perform the parikrama in the evening. After the evening Aarti, they assembled for a lecture in Bengali and Hindi.

Bhadra Van

'surukhuru' haete kari prabhate gaman / sri nivas kahe, -aei dekh 'bhadravan' //
krishna priya haya bhadravan gamnete / nakpusth lokprapti van prabhavete //
tasmin bhadravanaṁ namaṣaṣṭhaṁ ca vanam uttamam tatra gatva tu vasudhe
mad-bhakto mat-parayanaḥ tad vanasya prabhavena nagalokaṁ sa gacchati

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1674-76)

Bhadravana is the sixth transcendental forest. O! Earth- goddess, if a devotee goes there, he becomes perfectly devoted. (That is becomes my intense devotee)

and by the influence of that van, my devotee goes to heaven. Sri Bhakti Ratnakara describes Bhadravana as seventh Vana and Adi Varaha calls it sixth Vana. In this Vana, Sri Krishna and Baladev had played many games and grazed their cows.

Nanda ghat can be seen from Bhadra van. All paid obeisance to Nanda Ghat from a distance. Formerly when parikrama was performed on foot, devotees used to stay there for the night. There is no way to go there except on foot. Srila Narahari Chakravarti Thakur has written about the Nanda ghat as follows.

aei nandghat dekh-nandadi aetha / karila yamuna-snan ithe bahu katha // aekadasi nirahar kari dvadasi te / snan hetu prvesye kalindi jalete // varuner doot nande hariya lail / krishna tatha haete nande kotuke anil //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1595-97)

Varunadev had kidnapped Nanda Maharaj, when he was taking bath here and Sri Krishna had brought him again. So this place is known as Nanda Ghat.

In Sri Vrindavan, Sri Ballabh Bhatt said that he would revise and reform Bhakti Rasamrata Sindhu composed by Srila Rupa Goswami. Sri Jiva Goswami could not tolerate this and defeated Sri Ballabh Bhatt in a discussion (Shashtrarth). Rupa Goswami became angry with Jiva Goswami for ruling over and he ordered him to return home. Jiva Goswami did not return home but began to perform hard penance at Nanda Ghat. Due to hard penance, his body became very weak, and Srila Sanatana Goswami seeing the condition of Jiva Goswami, brought him again under the lotus feet of Rupa Goswami.

However, some people say that Rupa Goswami and Sanatana Goswami had written a victory letter to one digvijayi pandit (a scholar who is a conqueror of

many realms of the world). In order to establish the importance of his spiritual master, Jiva Goswami had defeated that Pandit in discussion. Rupa Goswami became angry at this and had punished Jiva Goswami. After that, Jiva Goswami came to Nanda Ghat and performed intense bhajan.

People, who come to Nanda Ghat, visit the place where he performed Bhajan and smear the dust of the place on their forehead. Srila Guru Maharaj's younger guru brother, Srila Bhakti Vikas Hrishikesh Maharaj, while describing the importance of Bhadravana spoke that Krishna-Balaram had cut their hair here (Mundan ceremony) and became Bhadra. So this place is known as Bhadra vana. Some say that Sri Krishna's churakaran lila was performed.

Bhāṇḍiravana

In Bhakti Ratnakara, Bhandir Vana is the eighth vana out of twelve vanas while Adi Varah mentions it as the eleventh Vana.

ekadaśaṁ tu bhanḍīraṁ yoginaṁ priyam uttamam tasya darśana-matrena naro garbhaṁ na gacchati bhanḍīraṁ samanuprapya vananaṁ vanam uttamam vasudevaṁ tato dṛṣṭva punar-janma na vidyate tasmin bhanḍīrake snatva samyato niyataśanaḥ sarva-papa-vinirmukta indralokaṁ sa gacchati

- Adi Varahe

The eleventh forest is Bhānḍiravana, which is very dear to the yogis. Simply by seeing it, a person will never again enter a mother's womb. A person who visits Bhānḍiravana, the best of forests, and sees the Deity of Lord Vāsudeva there, never takes birth again. A person, who sees Lord Vāsudeva there, gets control over the senses and eating, and one who bathes in Bhāṇḍiravana, becomes free of all sins and goes to Indraloka.

Pralambasura Vadha

Bhandiravana is situated two miles to the south of Bhadra Vana. Sri Krishna and Balaram with friends used to practice wrestling here. Sri Balaram killed Pralambasura in Bhandiravana. In 18th chapter of first canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, Pralambasura pastime has been described. Its substance is as follows:

Vrindavan Dham, the wandering place of Sri Krishna and Balaram, remained full of the virtues of spring even in summer. One day when Krishna-Balaram were busy playing, singing and dancing, a demon named Pralamba came in their midst assuming the form of a cowherd boy. Omniscient Sri Krishna understood that the newcomer cowherd as false. Thinking of a method to kill him, Sri Krishna selected him as his companion and made two groups according to age and strength of the cowherd boys. The leader of one group was Sri Krishna and the leader of other group was Balaram. There was a condition in the game that the defeated one would lift the victorious one on his shoulders. Both groups stood in line. The game started, Sridham and Vrishabh from the side of Balaram emerged victorious. Sri Krishna carried Sridham and Bhadrasan carried Vrishabh while Pralamba defeated by Balaram carried Him on his shoulder and escaping from the eyes of Sri Krishna, ran in opposite direction. This is an example of intimate rasas in Braja.

uvāha kṛṣṇo bhagavān śrīdāmānaṁ parājitaḥ vṛṣabhaṁ bhadrasenas tu pralambo rohiṇī-sutam

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.18.24

“Defeated, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa carried Śrīdāmā. Bhadrasena carried Vṛṣabha, and Pralamba carried Balarāma, the son of Rohiṇī.”

Balaram understood the evil intentions of the demon and increased his weight on his shoulder. When the demon could not tolerate the weight of Balaram, the pretending cowherd demon showed his real form. Seeing the terrible form of the demon, first Baladev showed the feeling of suspicion. Later, remembering that He had appeared only to kill the demons, He struck a heavy blow on the forehead of the kidnapper demon without any hesitation, just as Indra had struck on the mountain with Vajra's power. Pralambasura's forehead was torn and vomiting blood, he fell on the ground and left his body. Seeing this unique act of Baladev, cowherds and demigods showered him praises.

Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur has written about the killing of Pralambasura, Pralambasura is that symbol of women-seeker, profit and worship reputation. By the grace of Baladev, when these ill practices are destroyed, the qualification to attain Sri Krishna's company appears.

Bhandir Vata - Venukupa etc.

The devotees set out by bus to go to Bhandir Vana. However, the pathway restricted the movement of the bus. The devotees got off and covered the distance of six furlongs by foot. Amidst the beautiful forest, devotees performed Kirtan and reached Bhandir Vana. The places worth visiting are Bhandir Vata or Akshay Vata, Vamiskupa, temple of Dauji, Jhoolan temple of Radha-Krishna, seating place of eight sakhis in Jhoolan temple under Radha Krishna etc.

In Bhakti Ratnakar Granth, Srila Narahari Chakravarti Thakur has written about the importance of Bhandir Vana. One day Sri Krishna was sitting alone under Bhandir Vata and playing on his flute. Hearing the voice of flute Srimati Radha Rani became restless and immediately left with the gopis to meet Him. Radha Krishna felt ecstasy upon their meeting. Radha Rani enquired Krishna about His

pastimes with his cowherd companions. Krishna said proudly, “I assume the form of a wrestler and wrestle with Sakhas. I defeat all in wrestling, nobody can wrestle with me.” On hearing the proud words of Sri Krishna the main (head) Sakhi of Radha Rani, Lalita Devi said laughingly, “We shall also wrestle here”. Krishna praised himself and began to wrestle. A tough wrestling started between Sri Krishna and Radha Rani, but nobody could defeat the other.

mallikutya nijah sakhih priyatama garven sambhavita / mallibhuya madisvari rasmayi malltvmutknthya // yasmin samygupeyusa vakbhiya radha niydham muda / kurvana madansya tosmatnodbhandirkam tam bhaje //

(93rd sloka of Brijvilas stav in Stavali composed by Das Goswami)

(Where my master, Lord Krishna’s beloved, the full of love, Sri Radha decorated herself and her Sakhis as wrestlers, wrestled with curiosity with Bakari (enemy of Baka) Sri Krishna and thus increased the joy of Madan. I pray for that Bhandir van. Munjavati = Munja + Atvi. Munja means grass and atvi means garden.

Local Brajawasis, when describing the importance of this place, say that Radha Krishna’s marriage pastimes was performed under Bhandir Vata. Here, Krishna had dug a well with His flute and quenched the thirst of Sakhas with its water. Some say that at Krishna’s playing on the flute, cold water, attracted by the sound came up from the Patal (underground) and quenched the thirst of Sakhas.

Munjatabi and Isikatabi are near Bhandir Van. Here Sri Krishna had performed the pastimes of swallowing the forest fire. As cowherd boys were busy playing, the grazing cows strayed into the forest. Suddenly a forest fire blazed and all the cows, restless due to heat and thirst began to run into the dense of the forest. Meanwhile, when the cowherd boys finished their game and did not see cows, they became restless and began to search. Noticing the footprints of the cows and the grass scattered and cut by their teeth, they searched the way and finally

saw the cows in Saravana (forest of a kind of reed). While leading the cows back, the forest fire surrounded them. Frightened, they all went in shelter of Krishna. The Suprme Meditator Krishna asked all cowherd boys “close your eyes. Now I protect you by forest fire.” His friends immediately closed their eyes. Krishna then swallowed the forest fire. (Davanal - forest fire - disturbance towards religion and religious persons by atheist is forest fire and only Krishna can save from this fire.) After this Krishna, accompanying his friends returned to Bhandir Vana. When cowherd boys saw the unique Yoga power of Sri Krishna and knowing him as divine being began to pray Him while returning home.

dekha ‘bhandir bat sthan’ anupam / aetha bhal vislaya Krishna-balrama // sakhasaha mallvese khela khelaite / pralamb asur asi misaila tate // balrama kotuke pralamb vadh kela / sakhasah bhandire krishnaer nana lila //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1569-71)

Lohh Vana (Lauh Vana):

According to Bhakti Ratnakar Lauh vana is tenth among 12 forests and ninth according to Adi Varah Purna. Lauh Vana is situated four miles east of Mathura and on the other side of Yamuna river. And at a distance of two miles from Lohavan in south is Rawal village on the banks of Yamuna. A demon Lauhjang was the protector of this place. Hence, this place was named as Lauhavan. Krishna had killed the Lauhjang demon here. Sri Krishna Balaram grazed their cows here.

ahe sri nivas! Aei dekh lohavane / ‘lohvane’ krishner adbhut gocharan // nana pusp gandh vyapti ramyasthan / aetha lohjangsure vadhe bhagvan // lohjangha van nam iyat ihar /ae sarvapatak haete karye uddhar //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1696-98)

lohajaṅghavanaṁ namalohajaṅghena rakṣitam navamaṁ tu vanaṁ devi sarva-pataka-naśanam

(Adi Varah)

O! Devi, this forest protected by Lauhjung and named as Lohajungh is the destroyer of all evils.

When local Brajawasis pointed at a cave as the residing place of Lohajung, some devotees visited the place. In Lauhavan, Sri Gopinath temple established by Sri Vajranabh is worth seeing. Here there is a Kund named Krishna Kund. All paid there obeisance to the Kund and sprinkled its holy water on their foreheads.

Matt Vana

Matt Vana, a upavana, is among the twenty-four forests. This is across Yamuna and about three and half miles south of Bhadra Vana. The word Matt means – a big pot of mud. Brijwasis used to churn yogurt in big pots of mud and they would carry the pots from this place. Thus, this place is named as Matt Vana.

aei 'math gram' –mahanand aekhane / nana krida kare ram krishna sakha sane // muktika-nirmita vrihat patra-math nam / matha – utpatti prasast ae hetu math gram // dadhi manthanadi lagi brijbasigan / layen asankhya math – aeche save kan //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1686-88)

Stay in Gokul Mahavan math (6 Kartik 23 Oct Tuesday)

In Gokul Mahavan, the devotees count increased to three hundred. After Gokul Mahavan, the devotees would stay in Vrindavan. It was guessed that Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Vrindavan, would organize a festival to celebrate the auspicious appearance day of Nityalila Pravistha Om 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj.

The number of general devotees from different places of India was expected to be so high that Acharya of the math, Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj, had sent Sri Vasudev Prabhu and Sri Bhoodhari Brahmachari for the kitchen and staying arrangements.

It was late by the time the devotees reached Vrindavan Math from Gokul and the party decided to perform Parikrama in the evening instead.

The devotees could not visit Ramanreti while performing parikrama in Gokul on 21st Oct and so decided to set out to Ramanreti from Vrindavan Math at 5 pm on the 23rd Oct. They performed Kirtan on their way and reached Ramanreti at 6 pm.

After the parikrama of Sri Radha Madan Mohan temple, devotees danced and performed Kirtan before the deities for a long time. After the darshan of the deities, they went behind the temple and prostrating, they put the sand on their foreheads. Vaishnavas described the importance of place according to the scriptures and performed Kirtan. The local Brijwasi panda recited them the importance of the place. As it was late in the evening, the party could not have the Gopa Kupa Darshan. They paid obeisance from a distance. The devotees returned to the Math by 8 pm.

Meanwhile in Gokul Mahavan math, after evening Aarti of Sri Gokulananda and parikrama of the temple, Sankirtana, and assembly was performed.

Raman Reti

Out of six Goswami's, followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, one Srila Sanatana Goswami had lived in Gokul Mahavan for some time. Brijwasis had a deep regard for Sanatana Goswami and considered him highly affectionate.

In Ramanreti of Gokul Mahavan, Nandnandan Madan Gopal ji played with other cowherd boys. One day Sanatana Goswami saw this pastime by the devotional eyes and felt ecstatic. Sanatana Goswami thought that an extremely beautiful, special child, playing with other cowherd children, is not an ordinary child. One day, when the child was returning after the game, Sanatana Goswami began to walk after him. The child entered into the temple and disappeared. Sanatana Goswami did not see the child but only Madan Mohan. Paying obeisance to Madan Mohan, he returned home. Madan Mohan is under the control of the love of Sanatana Goswami. The word spread everywhere. Sanatana Goswami who passed his life only by begging (Madhukari Vrtti) built a big temple of Madan Mohan in Vrindavan and made arrangements of royal service for Him. Due to the atrocities committed by wicked Muslim persons, Madan Mohan first went to Bharatpur state, then to Jaipur, Rajasthan and at present He is living in Karoli.

In Ramanreti, Raman Bihari Radha Madan Mohan is seated. At present, the servitors of the temple have also established other temples of Sri Hanuman, Ramaneshwar Shiva, Parvati devi, Ganpati, Brahma etc. There are several small cottages for the sadhus stay and their food is arranged by the ashram. We saw several cows in the ashram. Chiaracharit Pratha Anuyayi followers lie in the sand of this place, but how many get the fortune of touching the transcendental sand of transcendental abode of Lord? Mere touch of the sand arise love for Madan Mohan and fascination for material objects is destroyed.

Gopa Kupa

‘ramnak’ balu – aei yamunar tirae / aetha range madan gopal krida kare // aek din mahavan vasi sisu sane / gopasisu rup aila ae divya puline // nana khela khel ye-ta dekhi sanatan / mane vicarye-ae samanya sisu nana // khela sanga kari sisu gaman karate / sanatan chalilen tahar paschate // mandire praves sisu, tatha sanatan / sisu na dekhiya dekha madan mohan // sanatan madan gopal pranmiya / alien vasa ghare kichu na kahiya // goswamir premadhina madan gopan / vyapila jagate yanra charitra rasal //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1780-86)

dekh aei kupe ‘gopikup’ sabe kaya / srigokul mahavan dui aek haya //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1787)

Locals say that Krishna dug the earth by his flute and prepared a well to quench the thirst of Sadhus.

Stay in Gokul Mahavan Math (7 Kartik 24th Oct. Wednesday):

Devotees set out from math at 7:30 am and performing Kirtan walked a distance of 5 miles on foot and reached Rawal Dham, on the banks of river Yamuna, the appearance place of Smt. Radha Rani at 10 am. While the onward journey the devotees were full of energy but while returning, as it was very hot, they had to take rest at several places. In Rawal, the devotees performed dance and Kirtan with great joy for long and sang the Bhajans of the grace of Radharani. The devotees felt great joy listening to Sri Radhika Tattva, its importance and her appearance in Hindi and Bengali by Vaishnavas.

Rabhel Dham or Rawal Dham

In Bhakti Ratnakar Granth and in the Stavavali-vrajavilasa composed by Srila Raghunath Das Goswami, the name of the appearance place of Srimati Radharani is Rawal.

ahe sri nivas dekh ae 'raval' gram / aetha vrisbhanur vasati anupam // sri radhika prakat haila aeikhane / yahar prakate such vyapil bhuvane//

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5.1809-10)

gāndharvāyā janimanirbhut yatra sankirtitaya-manandotkeh surmuninreh kirtidagrbhkhanyam / gopigopeh surbhinikareh sampriteatra mukhaye ravlakhye vrisarvipure pritipuro mamastam //

(90th sloka Stavavali Vraj Vilas)

Srimati Radhika born as a jewel from the womb treasure of Kiritida, was praised by the demigods, sages, and others who were filled with ecstasy. May I get deep affection for Vrishbhanupur called with the name Rawal dham, which is full of cowherd men and woman.

chabbish upavaner untargata rabhel dham

Several people say that Radha Rani is not described in the scriptures. But in Brahma-vaivarta Purana and Padma Purana composed by Krishna Dvaipayan Ved Vyasa, there is a clear description of Radha Rani. Besides this, the description of Radharani is found in Devi Bhagavat, Radha tantra, Radha Varaha Kalpa. The devotee Bhagavata or the pure devotees say that though Srimad Bhagavatam, the essence of all scriptures, does not mention this directly, but is pointed at Radharani.

anayārādhito nūnaṁ bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ yan no vihāya govindaḥ prīto yām anayad rahaḥ

Srila Bhakti Vinod Thakur has explained the meaning of this verse: “O friend, one, whom Krishna has taken to a lonely place, leaving us, must have worshipped Lord Hari more than us. The deep meaning is one whom Sri Krishna has taken, is the best among the lovers of Krishna and her name is Radha.”

In Brhad gautamīya-tantra, the name Radharani is clearly described

devī kṛṣṇamayī proktā rādhikā para-devatā sarva-lakṣmīmayi sarvakāntiḥ sammohinī parā

Besides this, in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrata and Sri Govinda Lilamrta written by Srila Kaviraj Goswami and in various scriptures written by Goswami’s, the element and importance of Radha has been described lavishly. The description of Radha, which is found in Sri Brahma vaivarta Purana, is as follows –

In Goloka, she had run towards Krishna, after appearing from left side of Rasamandal, so demigods address her as Radha. Sri Radha has come out of Sri Krishna and being a body inseparable to Krishna, she is the beloved of Krishna. By the bodily pores of Radharani, one lakh crore (100 billion) of Gopis and from the pore of Krishna’s body, one lakh crore cowherd boys and cows appeared. When Bhagavati Devi expressed her curiosity to Mahadev to know about the birth and meditation of Radha, Mahadev said that it is a highly secret element.

One day Sri Krishna was engaged in Rasa Vilasa with Virija. However, a messenger of Radharani narrated everything to her. Unable to tolerate, Radharani, showing the pastime of anger ran to meet Krishna. Krishna’s companion, Sudama, warned Krishna and with other Gopas ran away leaving

Virija. Virija, leaving her life, become a river. When Radharani condemned Krishna very much, Sudama unable to tolerate this condemnation opposed Radha; Radha cursed Sudama to get a demon form. At this Sudama also cursed Radha and said you will take birth at Bhuloka (earth) from Goloka and suffer intolerable separation from Krishna for hundred years.

By the curse of Radha, Sudama took birth as Shankhachurna named demon.

The story about Radharani's appearance in Sri Radha-tantra is as follows –

Lord Vasudev had worshipped Yogamaya. After worshipping for long Yogamaya said, "penance will not be successful by leaving Laxmi. Four garlands on my chest are my four messengers. These are Hastini, Padmini, Chitrini & Gandhini. Among these four garlands, Padmini garland is famous in Brija as Radha. You should go to Braja and attain the company of Padmini so that your penance will be fruitful".

Hearing these words of Yogamaya, Vasudeva desired to see the form of Padmini. At that time, Padmini, in the form of red lightning, appeared in a lotus having thousands of petals, seeing the beauty of Padmini, Vasudeva was astonished. When, this Padmini had performed the pastime of appearance in the form of an egg in a lotus group in the water of Kalindi, Vrishubhanu Raj was engaged in worship of Yogamaya to get the best daughter on the banks of Kalindi. Yogamaya Katyayni, having satisfied by worship gave a transcendentally splendorous egg to Vrishbhanu and said - I am captivated by the love of your wife. Give her this egg. You will get a daughter. Vrishbhanu carried the egg and kept it before his wife Kirtida. As soon as he kept the egg, it broke and Radharani appeared.

There is yet another story about the appearance of Radharani. Pleased by the penances of Vrishabhanu on the banks of Yamuna, Radharani Herself had appeared in a hundred petals lotus in Yamuna. Vrishabhanu felt ecstatic seeing the extremely pretty girl but saw that the eyes of the girl were closed. He felt sad about her closed eyes for many days. One day his friend Nanda Maharaj, with

his wife Yashoda and child Gopal had come to Vrishabhanu. Vrishabhanu while relating his sorrow to Nanda Maharaj, a surprising event happened. Infant Gopal went crawling to Radharani. At the touch of Gopal, both eyes of Radharani opened. It was the determination of Radharani that at the opening of her eyes, she would first see Krishna, so as soon as Krishna came to Her, She opened her eyes.

Radha Krishna Ganopdesha dipika composed by Srila Rupa Goswami

After reading this book, we come to know that the name of Radharani's father-in-law was Vrkagopa, brother-in-law was Durmada, mother-in-law was Jatila, and husband's name was Abhimanyu (Rayan). The reason for Radha's husband name being Abhimanyu is that he was externally the husband of Radharani. In reality, Radha's husband is Sri Krishna. Maternal grandmother was Mutthara, Nana's name was Satthada, and sister-in-law was Kutila, mother's name was Kritida Devi and father's name was Vrishabhanu.

But in Radha Varaha kalpa, the name of Vrishabhanu's wife was Kalavati. Kalavati gave birth to air, then the unborn Radharani, appeared. When Radha Rani was twelve years, Vrishabhanu got her married to Rayan Vaishya. It is written that Rayan was married to the shadow of Radharani. Srila Rupa Goswami mentions the name of Radharani' mother as Kirtida devi. This is worth accepting. In Radha Krishna Ganodeshdeepika composed by Srila Rupa Goswami, he has told about a group with the name 'Vara' of eight woman friends (sakhi). The name of first sakhi of the group has been described as 'kalavati'. Kalavati was born by the womb of Sidhumati and fathered by Kalankur Gopa, maternal uncle of Akramitra. The kalavati's father's name is Kapot. Sri Bhagavad Archan Vidhi, published by Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Matha, the word 'Kalavati' has been described in the prayers of Radharani. But the Vaishnava followers of Srila Rupa Goswami explain Kalavati as one virtue of Radharani.

brisbhanu suta santa kanta purna tama tatha / kamya kalavati kanya tirtha puta sati subha // anande kirtika, ranipremdhika, radhika laiya sathe / yasomati pase yaite ullase yasoda milila pathe //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 13.361)

Stay in Gokul Mahavan Math (8 Kartik - 25 Oct Thursday)

It was Sri Govardhan puja and Annakuta Festival and the annual function of the Math was celebrated.

Closing Indra’s Yajna, Sri Krishna showed the uselessness of the worship of demigods and arranged to satisfy Himself and His devotees. In Kali Yuga, Srila Madhavendra Puripada has organized Annakuta Mahotsava for Goverdhandhari Gopal. In a special assembly organized in Sri Math at noon, honorable swamis discussed Govardhan Tattva (element) and importance, supporting Sri Chaitanya Charitamrata and Srimad Bhagavatam.

Founder of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Matha, Nityalila Pravistha Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj used to honor Brijwasi Pandas. He felt satisfied by serving Brijwasis. In annual function of Gokul Mahavan Math, he would spend a lot of money and served Brijwasis by providing Prasad of Laddhu-Kachori, Puri etc. according to their taste. Brijwasis had great inner faith and attraction towards highly respectable Srila Gurudeva. Several Brijwasis became disciple of Guruji. Even after Srila Gurudeva long entered the eternal pastimes, the annual function of Gokul Mahavan is organized as usual. Service to Brijwasis, started by him continues.

Today, in guidance of present acharya of math thousands of Brijwasis took meal satisfactorily. Prasad was distributed between noon to 3 pm. Sri Revati Raman Chaudhari, resident of Kolkata and Sri Rakesh Kapoor, son of late Sri Narendra Kapoor, resident of Ludhiana sponsored and thus had the blessing of Sadhus.

Stay in Gokul Mahavan Math (9 Kartik 26 Oct Friday)

The devotees took rest in the Gokul Mahavan math. All roamed about freely for darshan. The Vaishnavas spoke Harikatha in both the morning and evening.

6 Camp: Vrindavan

Stay in Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math at Vrindavan (10 Kartik 27 Oct Saturday)

The devotees set out from Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math at Gokul Mahavan, by bus at 8 am, visited Dauji on the way, and reached Vrindavan at 11 am. The rooms in Vrindavan math were not enough to accommodate the increasing count of pilgrims. Additional arrangements had to be made in the nearby two/three Dharamshalas. The arrangements took much of their time and effort, and they could not perform parikrama that day. Besides many devotees at Gokul Mahavan, suffered malaria and more came into the grip of it in Vrindavan and few hospitalized as well. Acharya Sri of the math also fell ill after participating in the parikrama for a day.

Dauji

Dauji is located at the end of the south boundary of Vraja.

Here the famous temple of Sri Baladev is located. In Vraja, the importance of Dauji is especially prevalent. Bus stand is at a short distance from the Dauji temple. Pilgrims and Sannyasis got down the bus and reached the temple performing Kirtan. Being ecstatic, all danced before the deities for a long time. The deity of Dauji is black and large. On one side of the temple, Revati Devi, potency of Sri Baladev is seated. Her deity is also large. After the darshan of Sri Balaram, devotees went to Balaram Kunda, sprinkled the holy water of the kunda on their forehead, performed parikrama, and reached the bus stand. The buses left for Vrindavan Math.

Vrindavan Math (11 Kartik, 28 Oct Sunday to 22 Kartik 8 Nov 1994 Thursday until Rasa Purnima)

On 28 Oct, Sunday, the sankirtan procession reached Bhartol at 7:30 am, followed by a visit to Akroor ghat. It was noon when they reached the math. Near Bhartol, the devotees climbed the broken stairs and reached a memorial temple of Sri Krishna where He performed Bhartol pastime. This place is very lonely.

The temple lacked service by permanent servitors and the deity of Sri Radha Madhav once performed the disappearance pastime here. Later the deities again reappeared and now the service continues. On hearing the temple priest relating the inconveniences many devotees donated as much as they could. After the

Prasad, they took seat in the temple and Acharyadev, Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj, described the importance of the place in both Bengali and Hindi.

The journey to Akroor Ghat beset with thorns and stones troubled the devotees. They reached the memorial temple of Akroor Ghat and saw the subsided Yamuna River.

[Outwardly, they could not see the ghat of Yamuna River.

Only pure loving eyes can see the beauty of Vraja]

The Sri Temple of Akroorji, seats Akroor in the middle and Sri Balaram and Sri Krishna on either side. According to the direction of the honorable Srila Puri Maharaj, Srila Acharyadev described the importance of this place in Bengali & Hindi.

Bharatol

Situated one and half miles south of Vrindavan, Bharatol is the place where Sri Krishna and Balaram had begged food from the Yajnik Brahmanas. This lila is briefly described as follows:

Whenever Krishna would lead the calves to distant forest, he carried food along with him. However, if the forest were nearby he would eat only after returning home.

One day, Krishna and his cowherd friends decide to go to the nearby forest, and do not carry any food with them. As they wander, they reach the depth of the forest and realize it is noontime already. The hunger pangs make the cowherd boys restless and they plead Krishna to arrange food.

Though Krishna was of their age, the cowherd boys had a notion that Krishna was very powerful and could perform miraculous deeds. Therefore, in any inconvenient situation they would seek help of Krishna. ‘Small children start crying when they feel hunger. They do not think whether there is anything available at home or not. They trouble their mother’. So due to their child like nature, the cowherd boys plead Krishna for food.

Seeing no other way, Krishna says, “Look, Yajnik Brahmins are performing sacrifice nearby. They have collected a lot of foodstuff. Go there and tell them that Krishna-Balaram hungry without food from home are begging for it. They will give you something if you mention our name”.

So as per the direction of Krishna, the cowherd boys go towards the place of sacrifice. Approaching the sacrifice place, they notice nice foodstuffs arranged and sight the Brahmins offering oblation by the name of Krishna-Balaram. Hearing this, cowherds feel that they would get the food for sure. Remembering Krishna’s advice, the cowherd boys mention the name of Krishna-Balaram and request the Brahmins for food. However, the Brahmins refuse to look towards them. The cowherd boys request repeatedly, but the Brahmins remain busy in their work and do not give any beggary to the cowherd boys. Disappointed the cowherd boys return and tell the whole incident to Krishna and plead again.

This time Krishna advices the cowherd boys to meet Yajnik Brahmins’ wives instead. Krishna informs them about the many huts near the place of sacrifice where the Brahmins’ wives lived. He says, “They love me. If you beg taking my name, they will certainly give you something”.

Cowherd boys again proceed towards the place of sacrifice and sight the huts. As they approach the huts, they beg food in a sweet voice. Hearing the cowherd boys uttering the name of Krishna-Balaram, the Brahmins' wives come out immediately. Deprived of the company of Krishna-Balaram for a long time the wives feel restless to see them. Upon learning of Krishna-Balaram's hunger, and their request for food, the wives of the Brahmins take the sweets and liquids available in their homes and eagerly set out to feed Krishna- Balaram.

At the same time, the Yajnik Brahmins return home after their work. Upon seeing their husbands, the wives salute them and request their permission for the darshan of Krishna-Balaram.

'It is the duty of wife to obey her husband but Sri Krishna is the husband of all husbands. His service is the main duty'.

The husbands retort by saying it is improper for Brahmins' wives to go to the forest leaving their houses and husbands. They deny their wives the darshan. Further, they warn and damn their wives to stay away forever and never return if they disobeyed.

'When someone gets the causeless mercy of Krishna, he or she develops unalloyed devotion and no one can stop them'.

However, the wives disobey the order of their husbands, and set out to see Krishna-Balaram. One Brahmin even forcefully shuts his wife inside the house. The sad wife weeps for her misfortune, leaves her body, and goes to Krishna.

‘Nobody can stop the unalloyed devotees’.

The Brahmin wives feel bliss at the sight of Krishna-Balaram. They feed Krishna-Balaram and the cowherd boys with love and feel great satisfaction. After the meal, Krishna asks them to return. “Should we return home?” they question themselves and feel disappointed to hear Krishna’s words. They explain to Krishna how they disobeyed the orders of their husbands and are damned. Feeling hurt, they say, “Krishna, why are you speaking such harsh words?”

As Krishna hears these words from the Brahmins’ wives, in a sweet manner He assures them, “Your love for me will increase and purify further in separation. When we meet next, certainly it will be more pleasurable for us both.”

Krishna further explains that their husbands would certainly accept them and it would be improper for them to remain outside, as they were the wives of Brahmins. Preparing them this way, he orders them to return to their homes.

When they realize they have to return, the Brahmins’ wives feel restless and weep. Meanwhile, the Brahmins minds reform as the food served by their wives to Krishna belonged to them. Deprived of visible worship and darshan, in spite of Krishna and Balaram being so near, the Brahmins repent and condemn themselves.

dhig janma nas tri-vṛd yat tad dhig vrataṁ dhig bahu-jñatām dhik kulaṁ dhik kriyā-dākṣyaṁ vimukhā ye tv adhokṣaje

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.23.40

The brāhmaṇas said: To hell with our threefold birth, our vow of celibacy and our extensive learning! To hell with our aristocratic background and our

expertise in the rituals of sacrifice! All these are condemnable, as we were inimical to the transcendental Personality of Godhead.

While condemning themselves in such a way, they see their wives returning. Pleased, they salute and accept them.

‘Brahmins were very intelligent but they could not recognise Krishna and Balaram. They could not get His direct service. On the other hand, the Brahmins’ wives had no worldly wisdom, but they recognised Krishna and served him. What is the reason? The reason is that Brahmins did not have the company of pure devotee, which their wives had.

In a garden near the huts of the Brahmins, Krishna’s beloved devotee Malini Devi plucked flowers everyday and made garlands. While plucking flowers, she would call out Krishna passionately and sing His pastimes. Hearing the virtues of Krishna from her, devotion appeared in the hearts of the Brahmins’ wives. Moreover, they become restless like Malini for Krishna’s darshan’.

Krsna bhakti-janmool haya sadhu-sanga

Krishna’s darshan can be achieved by devotion only, achieved in the company of pure devotees.

Brahmins’ wives had fed Krishna Balaram in this place named as “Bharatol”.

Akroor Ghat

After the death of Aristhasur, Kamsa comes to know through Naradji that

Krishna and Balaram are not the sons of Nanda Maharaj ji; they are the sons of Vasudevji.

Naradji tells Kamsa, “Vasudevji had kept them in Nandalaya fearing you. Krishna and Balaram have killed many of your followers already. You will die by them as well”.

Hearing this Kamsa becomes angry and takes out his sword to kill Vasudevji. Then Naradji persuades, “Krishna and Balaram are infants, if you kill their father they will run away in fear and your work will remain incomplete”.

Knowing Vasudev’s sons to be the cause of his death, Kamsa immediately imprisons Vasudev inside the iron cell. After the departure of Devrishi Narada, he plots to kill Ram-Krishna. He sends Kesi Demon for this task. However, the idea fails as Kesi Demon soon encounters death in the hands of Ram-Krishna.

Next, Kamsa thinks of killing Ram-Krishna in a wrestling encounter. He orders for a big Maheshwar Puja and animal sacrifice on the Chaturdasi tithi. He plans the arena in such a way that all villagers can see the encounter. He thinks of posting the mad elephant, Kavlayapeed, at the gate for a surprise attack on Ram-Krishna and plans the sequence in such a way that, if the elephant failed in its attack, his wrestlers Chanura, Mustik and others could take over to kill Ram-Krishna.

After the necessary arrangements, Kamsa calls his ministers and wrestlers for a meeting. He gathers from Chanura and Mustik, the wrestling expertise of the Vraja’s inhabitants and their interest in it. He reveals his intentions and tells his wrestlers to ensure that Ram-Krishna are killed in the fight. Kamsa then decides to invite all of the Vraja’s residents including Ram-Krishna for the Dhanur-yajna sacrifice.

In order to fulfill his desire, Kamsa, expert in politics, calls Akroora, the best of the yadavas. Holding his hand, Kamsa tells Akroora to perform this friendly task for him,

“O descendent of Bhoj and Vrishnis, no one is useful except you. Just as Indra achieves kingdom and destroys demons with the help of Vishnu, similarly, I feel an immense need to take your help. You should ride on this chariot immediately and call Ram-Krishna here for wrestling. I am telling you with an intention that when they come to the wrestling arena, I will have them killed by the Kavlayapeed elephant. If they escape him, Chanura, Mustik and other wrestlers will kill them in the fight. After killing them, I will kill Vasudev, the chief descendent of Vrishnis, and other brothers and relatives in Bhajdarsah dynasty. After them, I will kill old father Ugrasen, desirous of my kingdom, his brother Devek, and all others who are my enemies. Besides, I have the support of my teacher Jarasandh, beloved friend Dvivid, Shambar, Narakasur, Banasur etc. I will kill all devotee kings and rule over the entire earth”.

Hearing the intention of Kamsa, Akroor praises Kamsa and says, “You have found a very good plan to escape death. Even then, only Lord provides fruits of work. So it is proper for you to see the success and failure of this work in an equal manner”.

By the order of Kamsa, the next morning, Akroor sets out towards Gokul on his chariot to bring Ram-Krishna.

[Gokul in a broad perspective - As the cruelties of demons like Pootana, Trinavratasur etc. increased in Gokul Mahavan, birthplace of Nandnandan Sri Krishna, Nanda Maharaj moved to Nandagram and later to Vrindavan. At that time, Akroor had joined Nanda Maharaj to bring both Krishna and Balaram]

Akroor has a deep desire to see Sri Krishna but begins to worry a lot on his way. He wonders if he is fortunate enough to see the lotus feet of Sri Krishna, worshipped by Brahma, Rudra and others. He understands that though Kamsa is wicked and is against the Lord and his devotees, the prospect of the darshan of Sri Krishna is only by his favor. He is unsure of Sri Krishna accepting his defects as he was representing the wicked Kamsa.

His thoughts run, “Knowing me to be different, will Krishna embrace me? After reaching Brij and seeing the footmarks of Krishna in the dust of Brij, I shall jump down the chariot and lie down in that dust”.

Thus immersed in various thoughts, Akroor reaches Gokul at sunset. Upon reaching Brij, Akroor lies down in the dust according to the feelings of his heart.

As he falls down on the dust of the feet of Ram-Krishna, they lift and embrace him. They take him home with great respect. After asking about his welfare, they wash his feet and seat him on the Asana. They nurse his feet and remove his tiredness. After the ceremonious welcome, they feed him varieties of food and juices with great affection. Nanda Maharaj also pleases Akroor with sweet words. Ram-Krishna offer great respect and request Akroor to rest.

Whatever he thought on the way, he got in Braja, ‘yadrishi bhavena yasya siddhi bhavrati tadrishi’

While conversing with Akroor, Ram-Krishna express their sorrow about the death of their relatives, brothers, and children of their guiltless mother. They enquire on the purpose of the visit.

Akroor relates everything to Ram-Krishna in detail – Kamsa's enmity towards Yadus, discussion between Kamsa and Naradji, repression of Vasudev, plan to bring Ram-Krishna to Mathura on the pretension of Dhanur-yajna sacrifice and murder them by Chanura and Mustika and use Akroor as a messenger for this task.

Ram-Krishna react with a laugh and relate the order of Kamsa to their father. Nanda Maharaj then orders the inhabitants of Gokul to visit the court of Kamsa with several gifts.

When the gopis hear about the departure of Ram-Krishna they get very restless. They outwardly become senseless with the fear of being bereft of Krishna's company. They begin to condemn the Lord, "Lord has sent this highly cruel Akroor to kidnap our eyes given by Him".

If the gopis do not see Krishna, they become like the blind. "It is dawn for the women of Mathura Puri. Certainly, He will fulfill all their wishes. The cruel is kidnapping our beloved Krishna and his name Akroor is not proper. Lord is certainly against us that is why the aged Brijwasis are not interrupting Krishna's departure".

The gopis pronounce Krishna's name loudly with no feeling of shame and block the way of Madhav.

Despite all these crying protests, Akroor starts the chariot.

Inhabitants of Gokul including the gopis run after the chariot. After some distance, Krishna glances towards them and consoles them with a message of returning soon through a messenger. The gopis stand there stunned until the chariot completely disappears in the flying dust in the distance. It is sunset time.

Lost in disappointment they return home.

Upon reaching the banks of river Yamuna, Ram-Krishna order Akroor to stop the chariot. They walk towards the river, offer oblation and drink some water. Ram-Krishna then return to the chariot.

Akroor chants and stays in the pond water of Kalindi- Yamuna. Strangely, for a moment, he sees Ram-Krishna in the water. How can Ram-Krishna be in water? He wonders in disbelief. He lifts up his head and sees them seated in the chariot! To confirm this vision was not his imagination, he dives into the water again. This time he sees the thousand-hooded Sri Anantdev worshipped by the lord of demons Bhujangraj. In the lap of Anantdev, he sees new- cloud colored, yellow clad clothes, fourhanded, full of sixteen arts, Vasudev served by His associates, and Brahma and other demigods seated there worshipped by Sanaka and other sages. Hypnotized by their darshan, Akroor prays in a glad voice. Thus ends the brief description of the pastimes at Akroor Ghat.

Vyasa Puja

On 17 Kartik 3 Nov, Saturday, all the devotees performed the parikrama of Vrindavan. The next day, 4 Nov, they performed the Vyasa Puja. It was the auspicious day of Sri Utthan Ekadasi, the appearance day of most revered Gurudeva Nityalila Pravistha Om Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj, founder of Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math.

Parikrama

The devotees visited several temples and places of regular visit in Sri Vrindavan between 12 Kartik 29 Oct Monday to 16 Kartik 2 Nov Friday.

31 Oct marked a different day. Due to illness, the Acharya of Sri Math could not join the Vrindavan parikrama with other devotees. Moreover, there was chaos and disturbance all over India due to the sudden death of India's Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi. There were no means of transport - train, bus etc. With great difficulty, the Math in charge collected the foodstuff, at a higher price, and arranged the meals for the pilgrims.

Meanwhile, under the guidance of Srimad Bhakti Sarvasva Nishkinchan Maharaj, Math in charge of Chandigarh, the devotees of Punjab reached Gokul Mahavan by bus. After visiting Govardhan and other places, they were compelled to stay there for two more days. After which, they somehow managed to reach the Vrindavan Math. There was no public transport yet. It would be some days before the trains started from Mathura.

The transport issues caused great worry to the Math in charge particularly about the pilgrims traveling to Kolkata on the Delhi- Howrah express on 9 Nov. By the grace of Sree Sree Guru Gauranga, few trains came in to service between 7 am to 8 pm on 8 Nov. There was some hope. Though Acharya Dev of Sri Math had not recovered fully, he along with Sripad Bhakti Prasad Puri Maharaj and Bhudhari Brahmachari rushed to Delhi from Mathura. There the train authorities assured them the Delhi-Howrah Express departure on 9 Nov.

The anxious moments were not over. In Mathura, the bus owners had to be persuaded a great deal to take the pilgrims to Delhi. The bus owners somewhat agreed. Two buses started on 9 Nov early morning. Sri Acharya Dev escorted the pilgrims and they reached the station by noon. The buses had to halt outside the station due to entry restrictions and the pilgrims, sages, and grihasta (family man) devotees had to carry the luggage over a long distance.

They awaited the arrival of the train inside the station. At around 1 pm, devotees distributed poori-prasad brought from the math. They had reserved two full bogies. Formerly there was a little dispute among the pilgrims about the choice of bogie. However, all could settle down comfortably. The train started. Some additional passengers got into the bogie as well!

Sri Acharyadev ji along with the preaching party traveled to Dehradun by Masoori exp.

Sri Vrindavan

It is the seventh-vana among twelve vans (forests). In Adi- varah Puran, it is the twelfth Van.

ahe Srinivas ! dekh vrindavan shobha, upma ki-yogendra-munindra-manlobha // vrindanishevit krsna-priya vrindavan, sarvapapnashe ae – durlabha ramya han//

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5/1875 – 76)

Vrindavanam dwadashkam vrindaya parirkshitam / mam chev priyam bhume sarva pataknashnam// Tattraham kridishyami gopigopalkeh sah / sarmayam suprtintnch dev danav durlabha//

(Adi Varah)

O earth this is the last van among twelve vans protected by Vrinda Devi. Vrindavan certainly destroys all sins and is my favorite. I will perform pastimes with Gopa and Gopis there. This forest is very beautiful, famous, and impossible even to demons and demigods.

tato vrindavanam punyam vrindadevi – samakshritam / harinadhisthitam tadhi brahma rudra adi savitam// vrindavan sugahnam vishalam vistrtam bahu/ muninamakshrme purna vanya – vrinda samanvitam //

(Skand puran mathura khand)

After this, by all means, Vrindavan protected by Vrinda Devi is much extended, full of Maths, ashrams, full of the forest Tulsi, served by Brahma, Rudra and other demigods, and is extremely difficult to achieve. It is very beautiful and Sri Hari is residing in that Vrindavan. According to the references in Gopaltapani Upanishad (from Atharva- Veda), in the midst of Gokul, Mathura Mandal is situated, which is of the shape of thousand petaled lotus. In the midst of the sixteenth petal, black colored, clad in yellow clothes and peacock tail, decorated with flute, Govind dev is situated. Radha is on one side of Govind Dev and Chadravali on the other side.

Sri Rupa Goswami, the associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, has described the importance of Vrindavan - Sri Krishna appeared in Mathura. Therefore, Mathura is better then Vaikuntha.

However, Krishna performed Rasa in Vrindavan so Vrindavan is better then Mathura.

trilokye prithvi dhanya yatra vrindavanam puri tattrapi gopika partha radha bhidhamam

(Adi Purana)

The three worlds are feeling obliged by the appearance of Vrindavan on earth and the cowherd damsels are also obliged, as among them is my highly beloved Gopi, named Radha.

-Srila Bhakti Binod Thakur

Explaining this verse Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has written that due to the appearance of Vrindavan, Prithvi (the earth) is the most fortunate among these three worlds, Bhooloka, Bhuvarloka, and Svargalok.

In the five days, during the circumbulation of Vrindavan, devotees visited the following places:

Sri Vrindavan Gaudiya Math, Kaliadeh, Bhajan Kutir established respected Shrimad Bhakti Hridaya Van Maharaj, Shri Madan Mohan Temple, ancient Madan Mohan temple, Samadhi Mandir of Srila Sanatan Goswami, Dwadshditya Teela, Kali Hrid(pond), Dawanal Kund, Bhajan sthali of Shri Prabodhanand Saraswatiji, Shri Radha Govind temple (new and old), Shri Shri Radha Gopinath temple, Shri Radha Raman temple, Shri Radha Damodar temple, Shri Radha Shyam Sundar temple, Shri Radha Gokulanand temple, Shri Sakshi Gopal Sthan, Shri Bajrang ji, Nikunj Van, Seva Kunj, Nidhuvan, Imli tala, Gopeshwar, Vansibat, Keshighat, Dheer Sameer, Adwait vat, Samadhi temple and Bhajan Sthali of Srila Rupa Goswami, Place of Srila Bhugarbh Goswamiji, Samadhi temple of Srila Gopal Bhatt Goswami, Bhajan Sthali and Pushpa Samadhi of Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami, Srila Jiva Goswami and other Goswamis on the path of Parikrama of Shri Radha Damodar temple etc.

Besides these, devotees also had the darshan of Sri Banke Bihari worshipped by

Sri Swami Haridas ji, place of sixty-four Mahantas, and other places of regular visit in Panch Kosi Parikrama.

Sri Binod Vani Gaudiya Math, Kaliya Deh: Param Pujyapad Nityaleela Pravisth Om 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Maharaj, elder godbrother of the founder of Shri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math – most revereed, Srila Gurudev Nityaleela Pravisth Om 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj Vishnupad, established a math in Kaliya Deh.

Before his disappearance, he donated the service of this math to Srila Gurudeva. Since then, Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math is conducting the service of this math. The Sri Vigrahas of this Math are Sri Sri Guru Gauranga ji and Radha Giridhari ji. There is also the Samadhi temple of Param Pujya Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Maharaj ji in this Math. A beautiful five-dome Shri temple has appeared here.

Sri Madan Mohan Mandir

Sri Sanatana Goswami desired to establish a math on Dwadashaditya Teela in Vrindavan and a temple for Sri Radha Madan Mohan ji. It is said that a rich Kshatriya, Sri Krishna Das Kapur, who was in service of some king, arranged for building the math and the temple, complete with kitchen and other facilities. Sri Kapur ji had accepted the shelter of lotus feet of Sri Sanatana Goswami ji. However, under the rule of Aurangzeb, the temple became impure. Later, a second temple was built in the adjacent land.

Original deity of Madan Mohan ji worshipped by Srila Sanatana Goswami ji is in Karoli, Rajasthan. The present deities of Radha Madan Mohan ji in Vrindavan are only the shadow deities.

Kaliya Hrid (Pond)

When Krishna grew up to be an adolescent, he started grazing cows instead of calves.

One day, during hot summer, without the company of Baladev, Krishna leads the cows and wanders into the forest along with his friends. As the day progresses, the gopas feel great thirst and are restless to drink water. They spot the Kaliya Lake and immediately approach it to drink its water. Death grips them with the mere touch of its poisonous water.

[It is written in the descriptions of the pastimes of killing the Kaliya, that the gopas and cows become senseless by the influence of Lord's Lila Shakti and drink the poisonous water]

When Lord of Yogeshwars, Sri Krishna, saw His sheltered people dead, he revived them immediately by His nectar showering vision.

The Gopas and cows regain consciousness, remember the past incidents, and look at each other in surprise. They then realize that their revival was only by the grace of Sri Krishna.

The killing of the Kaliya pastime in brief:

To end the sorrow of his devotees, Krishna decides to purify the poisonous water of Kalindi. Climbing the Kadamba tree, he jumps into the water. He swims

fearlessly and churns the water of the lake like an elephant. The serpent, Kaliya, sees the attack on his palace, comes to Krishna in anger, and starts to bite the soft parts of His body. Then the serpent starts to tighten the body of Krishna. The terrible incident causes His companions to faint and fall on to the ground.

Meanwhile, the Brijwasis experience bad omens of earthquake, falling of stars, shivering in the left parts of their body etc. They feel restless for Krishna. They imagine that since Krishna has not taken Balaram along, He has fallen into some trouble. They start immediately and follow the footsteps of Krishna, and reach the bank of Yamuna.

There they see their life and soul, Krishna, entwined with Kaliya serpent in the water of the lake. The three worlds begin to appear empty to them. All of them rush to enter the lake, but Baladev, who knows the opulence of Krishna, stops them. Krishna, to end the sorrowful sight of his devotees expands his body so much that the Kaliya serpent loosens grip. Krishna, like a Garuda in play, moves around the Kaliya serpent, climbs on to the hoods of Kaliya serpent, and starts the Tandav (fearsome) dance. The Kaliya serpent suffers greatly and vomits blood from his hoods.

Unable to see the bad condition of their husband, the wives of the Kaliya serpent approach Sri Krishna remembering the lord of all living and non-living beings, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead Narayan. They, along with their infants, pay obeisance to the lotus feet of Krishna and begin to pray to Sri Krishna with the desire of their husband's salvation.

The prayers of the wives, "O Krishna you have punished our wicked husband, you have done well. Your anger is only for our welfare. What is the fortune of our husband that he has held the dust of your lotus feet on his forehead? Kindly forgive our husband for the crimes he has committed unknowingly. We beg for his life from you."

Satisfied by the prayers, Krishna leaves Kaliya. The Kaliya serpent gradually regains power of senses and begs pardon for his crimes. After many prayers to Sri Krishna, the serpent wants to know his duty.

Sri Krishna orders the serpent to leave Kaliya Deh and go to Ramnak Island along with his relatives. Sri Krishna assures him, “you had come to Yamuna Hrida leaving Ramnak Island out of fear of Garuda, but now Garuda, seeing My foot prints on your forehead, will not devour you”.

Due to the curse of Saubhari Rishi, Garuda does not ever come to the Yamuna Lake. However, there is an educational subject here. Actually, the great splendorous Sage Saubhari commits a crime for ruling over a Narayan’s servant and is doomed. Vaishnava aparadha is greater than any other aparadha.

Srila Bhakti Binod Thakur has written about Kaliya Daman

– if one has to remove proud, wickedness, gracelessness, cruelty, kindles ness, he will have to achieve the grace of Krishna.

kaliyashya hridam gatva kridam kritva vasundhre / snana matren tattrev sarva papaeh praymuchyate // athartha munchate pranan mam lokam sa gachati /

(adi varah)

O Vasundhare, all sins are removed only by going to Kaliya Hrid, playing there and taking bath, a person who leaves his life in this Hrid, He goes to my abode.

Dwadashaditya Teela

ahe shrinivas ! Krishna kali hrida hete / kalike damankari aila ae tilate // surya gana Krsne ati sitarta janiya / shita nivarye ugra taap prakasiya //

(Bhakti Ratnakar)

suryae dwadashbhih param muraripuh shitart ugrataper bhaktim prem bhare rudarchitah shriman muda sevitah / yatra stri purusheh kvadant pashukule ravestitorajate snaeh dwadashsuryanam tadidam tirtha sada sanshraye //

(stavali brijvilas shloka 82)

Where the most merciful and beautiful Murari, in His pastime of being highly cold, was worshipped by the heat of twelve suns who were full of love and devotion and liberal due to ecstasy. Where melodious men and women, surrounded by cows and their love, were seated. I always go in shelter of that twelve sun named pilgrimage (Tirtha).

Davanal Kund

After subduing Kaliya, Krishna comes out of Yamuna’s lake decorated with several ornaments. Balaram and other Brijwasis see and embrace Him with great pleasure.

[Guru, priests, and Brahmins tell Nanda Maharaj that his son though attacked by Kaliya serpent escaped by fortune.]

Tired due to hunger, thirst, and hard labor the Brijwasis stay the night at the bank of Kalindi. When asleep, there is a forest fire (Davanal) in the dry forest. The fire surrounds all of them in a way that is too sudden. Seeing no means of saving themselves, they run for shelter of Krishna. Highly powerful, the possessor of countless potency, Krishna swallows the terrible forest fire and saves his followers.

About this, Srila Bhakti Vinod Thakur has written that conflict in the lineage (paramparavad), jealousy from the lineage (sampradayavidvesh), jealously for conflict with other demigods, war and other mutual conflicts are forest fire (Davanal). Only Supreme Lord Sri Krishna can save from this forest fire.

ohe! shrinivas kalidamner dinae/ dawanal pan Krishna kael aekhane // sae davanal sthan ye kare darshan/ samsar davagni haite haya vimochan//

(Bhaktiratnakar 5/3756-57)

Sri Radha Govind Mandir

Srila Rupa Goswami ji worshipped Sri Radha Govind ji. He originally seated the deity in a cottage made of leaves. Later a disciple of Sri Raghunath Das, Bhatta Goswami, built a temple to serve the Sri Vigrah.

In 1 59, king of Ambar, Raja Ram Singh constructed the uniquely carved seven-storey temple in red stone. Aurangzeb could not tolerate the beautiful sight of this temple from Agra. Jealous, he ruined few storey of the temple. Considered impure, the devoted, built another temple to preserve and serve the deities of Sri Sri Radha Govind ji. The original deities of Sri Sri Radha Govind ji are in Jaipur while the Vrindavan temple seats the shadow deities.

The temple of Sri Sri Radha Govind ji is a unique example of Hindu Sculpture. Mr. Grause in his Mathura history book has expressed the following views about Sri Radha Govind temple, “the temple of Govind dev is not only the finest of this particular series, but is the most impressive religious edifice that Hindu art has ever produced, the best in upper India”.

Sri Govind dev ji established by Vajranath, the great grand son of Sri Krishna, again appeared in Kali Yuga by the pure love of Srila Rupa Goswami ji. Given below is its brief history:

Srila Goswami ji comes to know about the disappearance of Govind ji in Yogpeeth. He searches for Him in all the houses of the Brija residents in Brijamandal. Unable to find Him, Srila Goswami ji becomes restless in separation of Govind ji.

One day, while on the bank of river Yamuna, a man dressed as a Brijwasi tells him, “Govind is hiding in a Yogpeeth named Gomatila in Vrindavan. There a fortunate cow feeds him milk everyday”. The next morning Sri Rupa Goswami digs the Gomatila with the help of Brijwasis and Sri Govind dev ji, who attracts the millions of love gods, appears there.

Sri Radha Gopinath ji Mandir

Sri Gopinath ji is the worshipped deity of Shri Madhu Pandit, a disciple of Srila Gadadhar Pandit Goswami ji.

Shri Parmanand Bhattacharya found the deity of Sri Gopinath ji near Vansibat and Sri Madhu Pandit received the service of the deity. Later the deity of Sri Radha ji appeared in support of Sri Madhu Pandit.

parmanad bhattacarya mahashaya / shri madhu pandit ati guner alaya //dhonha premadheen Krishna vrijendra kumar/ param durgam chasya kahe sadhya kar // vanshivata nikat param ramya haya / tatha gopinath mahanande vilasya// akasmat darshan dilen kripa kari / shri madhu pandit haila seva adhikar //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 2/874 – 76, 479)

In Sri Sadhana Dipika, it is described that the Sri Gopinath Deity appeared because of Sri Madhu Pandit.

yasten suprakritito gopinatho dayambudhih vanshibat tate srimad yamunop tate subhae /

Ocean of mercy, Gopinath has appeared because of Madhu Pandit under the beautiful Vansibat on the bank of Sri Yamuna. The original deity of Sri Radha Gopinath ji is now in Jaipur. Their shadow deities are seated in Sri Gopinath temple, Vrindavan.

Shri Radha Raman Mandir

The deity of Sri Radha Raman worshipped by Sri Gopal Bhatt ji appeared in a unique manner. The incident is thus:

While wandering in the pilgrimage places, Sri Gopal Bhatt finds a Saligram Shila near the bank of the Gandaki River.

[It is said that Sri Gopal Bhatt used to serve twelve Saligram everyday]

One day a rich man gives Gopal Bhatt Goswami many clothes and ornaments for the service of Lord. Srila Gopal Bhatt Goswami begins to think, "If Saligram appears in the Deity form of Brijendra Nandan Krishna, I will be able to serve him properly with these clothes and ornaments". Immersed in these thoughts, he puts the Saligram ji to sleep. The next morning, to his surprise he sees that one Saligram, out of the twelve, has appeared as Deity in the form of Radha Raman.

Hearing the unique appearance of Sri Krishna and his mercy, Sri Rupa Goswami, Sanatana Goswami, and other Vaishnava devotees come to see the Deities of Radha Raman ji and become ecstatic upon its darshan.

On the Vaishakhi Poornima tithi, annual bathing festival of Sri Radha Raman ji is organized. One can see only a silver crown on to the left of the deities, instead of the deity of Srimati Radha Rani. Sriman Mahaprabhu ji, being affectionate to Srila Gopal Bhatt Goswami, had sent his used string, Kopin (cloth of undergarment) and black colored wood stick. These are worshipped everyday in the temple. Situated behind the Sri Radha Raman temple is the original Samadhi temple of Srila Gopal Bhatt Goswami.

Sri Radha Damodar Mandir

Jiva Goswami ji, among the six Goswamis, worshipped the deity of Sri Sri Radha Damodar. After the disappearance of Sri Rupa Sanatana and others, Sri

Jiva Goswami was elected to the highest seat of Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya of Mathura Mandala and Utkal- Gauda (Orissa-Bengal).

Besides Sri Radha Damodar ji, a Govardhan Shila worshipped by Sri Sanatana Goswami is seated in the temple. And behind this temple, the places worth visiting are Bhajan Sthali and Samadhi temples of Sri Radha Goswami ji, Srila Jiva Goswami and Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami, Pushpa Samadhi of Srila Bhugarbh Goswami ji and Pushpa Samadhis and Bhajan Sthalas of other Goswami ji's.

Shri Radha Shyam Sundar Mahdir

After the six Goswamis, Sri Shyamananda Prabhu was the main Acharya among the three Acharyas of Shri Gaudiya Sampradaya. Dukhi Krishna Das, disciple of Sri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu received the famed name Shyamananda from Sri Jiva Goswami ji. Sri Radha Shyam Sundar ji is the worshipped deity of Sri Shyamananda Prabhu ji.

Sri Radha Gokulanand Mandir

Sri Radha Gokulanand is the worshipped deities of Srila Vishwanath Chakrabarty Thakur ji. Govardhan Shila and Gunjmala, given by Sriman Mahaprabhu to Sri Raghunath Das Goswami, is worshipped in Sri Gokulanand Mandir. The temple also seats the original Samadhi of Srila Loknath Goswami ji.

Sakshi Gopal

It was sometime during the rule of Maharaj Pratap Rudra ji. Hypnotized (tied) by the love of both the Brahmin brothers of Vidyanagar of Andhra Pradesh, one day the deity of Gopal went on foot following the younger Brahmin. They did not fail to witness this and since then Sri Gopal became famous as Sakshi Gopal. Now Sakshi Gopal is seated twelve miles away from Puri. This place is a pious example of Love.

The reference of both the elder Brahmin and the young Brahmin including Sakshi Gopal is described in the fifth paragraph of Madhya Lila of Sri Chaitanya Charitamrata.

Nikunj Van

Nikunj Van is the eternal roaming place of Sri Sri Radha Krishna ji. Although Vrindavan has changed outwardly as a city, Nikunj Van place is enlightened as a beautiful and decorated forest. Many monkeys inhabit this place.

During the conjugal pastimes of Radha Krishna in Seva- Kunja, there is no entrance for any unauthorized person. People say that if any unauthorized person entered here during the night, he would die immediately. Therefore, the visitors leave the place before dusk.

The temple of Sri Radha Krishna ji is in Seva-Kunja. The Kund of Lalita Sakhi, main among the eight Sakhis is also situated here. Shi Shyamananda Prabhu ji used to do Marjan Seva (cleaning service) in Seva-Kunja everyday. One day as he was cleaning the place, he found an anklet of Radha Rani. Feeling bliss, he

put the anklet on his forehead. The sign of the anklet made an imprint on his forehead. From then on, the sect of Shyamananda Prabhu ji follows the Noopur Tilak.

Nidhuvan

ahe shrinavas ! radha Krishna sakhi sane / nidhuvan kridarat ae nidhuvane // (Bhaktiratnakar 5/2368)

Nidhuvan is located in the middle of Sri Vrindavan. Vishakha Kund is situated in this beautiful forest. Here the famous Vaishnava from western India, Sri Haridas Goswami ji, received the service of Sri Banke Bihari ji. Later the temple of Banke Bihari ji was established. Most people in western India have deep faith in Banke Bihari ji and huge rush of visitors can be seen in this temple.

Imlitala

prāte vṛndāvane kailā 'cīra-ghāṭe' snāna teṅtulī-talāte āsi' karilā viśrāma kṛṣṇa-līlā-kālera sei vṛkṣa purātana tāra tale piṅḍi-bāndhā parama-cikkaṇa nikaṭe yamunā vahe śītala samīra vṛndāvana-śobhā dekhe yamunāra nīra teṅtula-tale vasi' kare nāma-saṅkīrtana madhyāhna kari' āsi' kare 'akrūre' bhojana

CC. Madhya 18/75-78

“The next morning Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu returned to Vṛndāvana and took His bath at Cīra-ghāṭa. He then went to Teṅtulī-talā, where He took rest. The tamarind tree named Teṅtulī-talā was very old, having been there since the time of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Beneath the tree was a very shiny platform. Since the

river Yamunā flowed near Teṅtulī-talā, a very cool breeze blew there. While there, the Lord saw the beauty of Vṛndāvana and the water of the river Yamunā.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu used to sit beneath the old tamarind tree and chant the holy name of the Lord. At noon He would return to Akrūra-tīrtha to take lunch.”

hari hari ! ara kabe paltibae dasha /ae saba kariya vamae, yava vrindavan dhame,

Senior god brother of our Gurudeva, Nityalila Pravistha Param Pujyapad Srimad Bhakti Sarang Goswami Maharaj, founder of Sri Gaudiya Sangh, served at Imlitala and enlightened it. This three-room temple, seats the deities of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, Sri Gaur Nityananda and Sri Radha Krishna ji. A Pushpa Samadhi temple of founder of Sri Gaudiya Sangh is also here. The residents of Math and local people relate other importance of this place.

Gopeshwar

Kshetrapal (the protectors of the Dham) Mahadev protects the abode of Lord Vishnu, Mathura Puri. Likewise, Sri Krishna’s beloved, Kshetrapal Mahadev Gopeshwar is the protector of Vrindavan Dham. Without the grace of Kshetrapal Shiva, no one can enter into Vrindavan Dham. The importance of Shiva, beloved devotee of Sri Krishna, in detail is in the section of Pipleshwar Mahadev in the Mathura Parikrama on page 17.

Vansibat, where Sri Krishna performed Rasa Dance, is near to Gopeshwar Mahadev. The following text briefs the importance of Gopeshwar Mahadev ji:

[Only the highly enlightened, full of Rasa or Rasashrit devotees, have the right to enter into the Rasleela of Sri Krishna]

Mahadevji in order to enter into the Rasa dance assumes the form of a Gopi. Other gopis are oblivious to this. However, on the auspicious arrival of Mahadevji, omniscient Sri Krishna recognizes and welcomes him in a special way. The manner of respect bestowed to the newcomer aroused suspicion in the minds of Radha Rani and other gopis. Nevertheless, Krishna dispelled the suspicion of the gopis and told Mahadevji to assume the Kshetrapal Gopeshwar form in Vrindavan, “without your grace, nobody will get the right of entering into Sri Vrindavan”.

A small deity of Shiva in the form of a Gopi, studded with serpent around neck, is present in the corner of Vansivat.

Vansi Vat

Sri Rupa Goswami ji has propounded the greatness of Mathura more than Vaikuntha due to appearance pastime of Krishna in Mathura and the superiority of Vrindavan over Mathura due to Rasa dance pastime. Sitting under Vansibat in Vrindavan, Sri Krishna attracted the Gopis by the sound of his flute and performed Rasleela.

[One who has no faith in Supreme Lordship of Sri Krishna and no control over the senses, has no right to think of Rasleela even]

naitat samācarej jātu manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ vinaśyaty ācaran mauḍhyād yathārudro 'bdhi-jaṁ viṣam

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.33.30

One who is not a great controller should never imitate the behavior of the ruling personalities, even mentally. If out of foolishness an ordinary person does imitate such behavior, he will simply destroy himself, just as a person who is not Rudra would destroy himself if he tried to drink an ocean of poison.

An atheist, helpless in suppressing his sense organs or a person who has no faith in the omnipotence of Sri Krishna, falls down even when he just thinks of Rasleela, what to say of its visible following. 'Ayurve Ghritam' age increases by eating Ghee – this is for a healthy person. However, for a person suffering from dysentery, Ghee does not increase age rather decreases it.

Therefore, an unqualified lustful person should not follow up Rasleela. If a lustful person hears and recites Rasleela, thinks Sri Krishna as an ordinary person and Gopis as ordinary women and provide fuel to his lust, he will fall down. Some people refer Srimad Bhagavatam and say, 'disease of the heart, lust cannot be removed without hearing, and reciting the Kirtan of Rasleela and Paramatma cannot be achieved'. However, they do not follow the meaning of shridhanvit and anushrunayat words:

vikrīditaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ śraddhānvita 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmaṁ hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ

-Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.33.39

Krishna is the only enjoyer and others are for his enjoyment. Until we do not recognize Krishna as the full and only enjoyer and instead understand him as a part of our pleasure, we have no right of hearing Sri Krishna's pastimes. Rasleela is way beyond.

ahe shrinivas ! aee yamuna – nikat / param adhbhuta shobhamaya vansivat //
vansivat chaya jagtaer dukha hare / aetha gopinath sada anandae vihare //
bhuvan mohan vashae sucharu bhangite / gopigan akarshaye vanshir svanete //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5/2379 – 81)

śrīmān rāsa-rasārambhī vaṁśīvaṭa-taṭa-sthitaḥ karṣan veṇu-svanair gopīr gopī-nāthaḥ śriye 'stu naḥ

CC Ādi 1.17

Śrī Śrīla Gopīnātha, who originated the transcendental mellow of the rāsa dance, stands on the shore in Vaṁśīvaṭa and attracts the attention of the cowherd damsels with the sound of His celebrated flute. May they all confer upon us their benediction.

At Vansibat, they sang the song, "Radha Kund tate kunj kutira…" composed by Srila Bhakti Binod Thakur ji.

Dhir Samira

ahe shrinivas ! ae dheer sameerae / krishnaer nikunjaleela ashesh prakare //

Kesi Ghat

shriradhakrishnaer aitha adbudh milan / mahasukhe asvadyae tanra priyagan //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5/2374 – 75)

At Kesi Ghat Sri Krishna killed a demon named Kesi sent by Kamsa. The pastime of the killing of the demon Kesi appears in the 37th chapter of the 10th canto of Srimad Bhagavatam. The pastime in brief:

Kamsa hears from Devrishi Naradji that Ram-Krishna are not Nanda Maharaj's sons but Vasudev's sons and that Nanda Maharaj had kept both of them in Nanda Bhavan, out of fear of Kamsa. Thus, Kamsa is angry and tries to kill Vasudev. Narada stops him, "if you kill Vasudev, Ram-Krishna will escape". After which, Kamsa imprisons Vasudev-Devki and plots to kill Krishna. First, he sends the Kesi demon.

Kesi demon assumes the form of a big and terrible horse and reaches Brija. The demon neighs and searches for Krishna. All the inhabitants of Gokul shudder in fear at the terrible neighs and the cruel appearance of the demon. To save His people from danger, Krishna approaches the demon and challenges him into a fight.

Kesi demon in anger kicks Krishna. In the action, Krishna grabs both the legs of the demon, spins him in the air, and hurls him at a distance of four hundred hands. Wounded Kesi demon faints. Again, after gaining consciousness, the demon with his mouth wide open rushes towards Krishna.

As the demon closes in, Krishna pushes his left hand into the open mouth of the Kesi demon. The demon tries to chew his hand but feels it like hot iron. To put this to an end soon, Krishna expands his hand and closes the windpipe of the demon. The demon trembles in terrible pain and succumbs to death.

Upon the death of the Kesi demon, demigods begin to pray and shower flowers with great pleasure. Sage of demigods, Narada also comes down to see Sri Krishna and recites the future pastimes.

Srila Bhakti Binod Thakur ji has symbolized Kesi demon to the pride, "I am big devotee and Acharya. Breaking of false ego and affluent wisdom is the meaning of Keshi demon's killing. The salvation from this wrong notion is possible by grace of Krishna."

ae keshitirtha dekh ahe shrinivas ! ihar mahima bahu purane prakash // kashivadh kela Krishna param kotukae / yamunay hast pathalila mahasukhae //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5/2369, 2372)

ganga satgunam punyam yatra keshi nipatitah / tatrapi cha visheshoasti keshitirtae vasundharae//

(adi varah)

tasmin pindpradanaen gaya pindafalam labhaet// heshabhirjagatitrayam madbharerudkamyantam pareh fullnnetravidhurnaen paritah purna dahntam jagat/

tvam tavktkrnavadwidirya vakbhidvidveshinam keshinam yatra kshalitavan karo

sarudhirau tat keshi tirtha bhaje//

(shri stvavalyam vrijavilasa 85th shloka)

The Kesi demon in the horse form, highly intoxicated, shook the inhabitants, neighing, rolling its eyeballs, and burning all the four directions. Then the killer of Baka, Krishna crushed the jealous Kesi like grass. He washed his blood-smeared hands at a place called Keshi Tirtha. I pray to that place.

Srila Rupa Goswami has described the unique beauty of Sri Krishna at the ghat of Kesi Tirtha and written:

merāṁ bhangī-traya-paricitāṁ sāci vistīrṇa-driṣṭiṁ vaṁśī-nyastādhara-kiśalayām ujjvalāṁ candrakeṇa | govindākhyāṁ hari-tanum itaḥ keśi-tīrthopakaṇṭhe mā prekṣiṣṭhās tava yadi sakhe bandhu-sange 'sti rangaḥ || 239 ||

Oh Friend! If you have any desire to enjoy any jest in the company of your friends and relatives, then never meet the Person of Lord Govinda near Kesi-ghat (on the bank of the Yamuna at Kesi- tirtha where Demon Kesi was killed by the Lord), whose Face is always fascinatingly singling, whose posture having three bends is forcefully heart-attracting, whose long-drawn Eyes are crafty and enchanting, whose soft Lips are put on the holes of the Flute, and whose Head is decorated with the charmingly beautiful tails of peacocks!

Meaning, if one sees the unique beauty of Govind ji at Keshi Tirtha, no attachment remains for anything else.

Advaita Vat

Advaita Acharya once sat under the Banyan tree.

ye vatvriksher tale advaitaer stithi / sarvatra hael se advait vat khyati // ae advait vat dristhae sarvapap kshaya / param durlabha – prem bhakti labhaya haya//

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5/291 – 292)

Chira Ghat

One day, after performing Rasa leela and conjugal pastimes, Sri Radha Krishna, along with friends come to Yamuna for bath. They change to bathing wear and leave their clothes under the Kadamba tree. They dive and play in the water and remove their tiredness. When they return to Padmavan, they do not find their clothes. Worried, they look for their clothes all around.

Krishna had played mischief. Through some trick, He had hidden the Sakhis clothes. He enjoyed the despair of the Sakhis for a while and laughingly returned their clothes to them.

Krishna performed the pastimes of stealing the clothes in Chira Ghat.

Vilvavan Shri Van (17 Kartik 3 Nov, Saturday)

Situated on the east bank of Yamuna River, this Van is among the twelve Vans. Sri Bhakti Ratnakar mentions it as the ninth vana, while Adi Varaha as the tenth.

Parikramakari devotees started to Vilvavan, from Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, at 7 am. The Sankirtan procession moving towards north Vrindavan crossed the city and reached the bank of river Yamuna. Boating arrangements are quite adequate for people crossing Yamuna to reach Vilvavan.

Pandas decided the fare with the boatmen. The pilgrims took turns and reached the other side. The devotees walked for two miles, performed Kirtan, danced all their way, and reached Vilvavan by 1 pm. They passed through the beautiful scenery along the bank of Yamuna. Even the outward appearance was beautiful with full of trees and creepers.

The Shri temple of Vilvavan seats the deity of Sri Laxmiji, besides the footprints of Shri Laxmi Devi and deity of Shri Gopal.

Cowherd friends with Sri Krishna and Balaram had eaten ripe Vilva fruits here in Vilvavan. However, there is not a single Vilva tree in Vilvavan in its outward appearance today.

The devotees assembled in the temple and honorable Vaishnavas explained the importance of the place in both Hindi and Bengali.

ramkrishna sakha sah ae bilvanete / pakvbilav fal bhunje mahakotukete // devta pujit bilvavan shobhayam / ae van gamne brahmaloke pujya hay //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5/1689)

vanaṁ bilvavanaṁ nama daśamaṁ deva-pujitam tatra gatva tu manujo brahmaloke mahīyate

The forest named Bilvavana, which is worshiped by the demigods, is the tenth forest. A person who goes there is glorified on Brahmaloka.

In order to enter Sri Krishna's pastimes, Laxmi Devi performed penance in Shri Van.

Nevertheless, it is a matter of surprise that in spite of performing hard penance repeatedly, she could not attain the right to enter into Rasleela. What is the cause of this mystery?

When Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ji was living in Shri Ranga- dhama in southern India, he explained this to Shri Venkat Bhatt and his relatives. By element, there is no difference between Laxmi- Narayan and Shri Radha Krishna. However, Krishna's Rasa is at the highest pitch.

(Formerly Shri Venkat Bhatt and his relatives worshipped Laxmi Narayan. Later by the grace of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ji, they became devotees of Shri Radha Krishna. Srila Kaviraj Goswami ji has described this reference in ninth Chapter of Madhya Leela of Sri Chaitanya Charitamrata)

siddanta tastva bhedepisrish krsna svarupayo rasanotkrsyate krsnarupamesha rasasthiti

-Bhakti rasamrata sindhu purva vibhaag, sloka 32.

Though Laxmi Devi performed great penances to get the company of Krishna,

her faithfulness towards her husband remained. She performed penance with majestic aspects and every time got the company of Narayan, but never the company of Krishna.

Only by following His sheltered deity, one achieves the company of Nandnandan Krishna, the deity of pastimes in sweetness. Shri Laxmi Devi did not follow Srimati Radha Rani or the Gopis for that matter and thus could not get the company of Krishna.

gopa-jāti kṛṣṇa, gopī——preyasī tāṅhāra devī vā anya strī kṛṣṇa nā kare aṅgīkāra lakṣmī cāhe sei dehe kṛṣṇera saṅgama gopikā-anugā hañā nā kaila bhajana anya dehe nā pāiye rāsa-vilāsa ataeva 'nāyaṁ' śloka kahe veda-vyāsa

C.C. Madhya 9.135-137

nāyaṁ śriyo 'ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ svar-yoṣitāṁ nalina-gandha-rucāṁ kuto 'nyāḥ rāsotsave 'sya bhuja-daṇḍa-gṛhīta-kaṇṭha- labdhāśiṣāṁ ya udagād vraja-vallabhīnām

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.47.60

When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the gopīs in the rāsa-līlā, the gopīs were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This transcendental favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune or other consorts in the spiritual world. Indeed, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets, whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. And what to speak of worldly women who are very beautiful according to material estimation?

sarvādbhuta-camatkāra-līlā-kallola-vāridhiḥ atulya-madhura-prema-maṇḍita-priya-maṇḍalaḥ tri-jagan-mānasākarṣi-muralī-kala-kūjitaḥ asamānordhva-rūpa-śrī-vismāpita-carācaraḥ

- Sri Sri Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu

“Apart from these sixty transcendental qualities, Kṛṣṇa has additional four transcendental qualities, which are not manifest even in the personality of Nārāyaṇa. These are:

1. Kṛṣṇa is like an ocean filled with waves of pastimes that evoke wonder within everyone in the three worlds.

2. In His activities of conjugal love, He is always surrounded by His dear devotees who possess unequaled love for Him.

3. He attracts the minds of all three worlds by the melodious vibration of His flute. 4. His personal beauty and opulence are beyond compare. No one is equal to Him, and no one is greater than Him. Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead astonishes all living entities, both moving and nonmoving, within the three worlds. He is so beautiful that He is called Kṛṣṇa.

Because of these four unique virtues and affluent form, Shri Laxmi has an intense desire of Sri Krishna every moment.

- Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokaṁ mṛḍayanti yuge yuge

(Bhāg. 1.3.28)

“All the lists of the avataras of Godhead submitted herewith are either plenary expansions or parts of the plenary expansions of the Supreme Godhead, but Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself.”

With the desire of getting the company of Krishna, Shri Laxmi Devi ji had come to Vrindavan leaving Vaikuntha. On the other hand (at the disappearance of Krishna in Rasleela) Gopis were restless in separation of Krishna.

Krishna once went to the gopis in the form of fourhanded Narayan, but they did not accompany him, instead paid obeisance and walked away.

Vaikuntha is with a distance.

However, when Srimati Radha Rani reached there, Krishna could not defend his four handed form. In love of Radha Rani, two of his arms turned inside and he appeared in his two handed form, holding the flute. This pastime was performed in Paith Dham (near Govardhan).

Sriman Mahaprabhu ji while wandering in Sri Brij Mandal entered Shri-vana.

'śrīvana' dekhi' punaḥ gelā 'loha-vana' 'mahāvana' giyā kailā janma-sthāna-daraśana

C.C. Madhya 18.67

In Bhakti Ratnakar Granth, there is a reference of Kund named Sri Krishna Kund in Vilvavan. After Shri-van, some devotees visited Manasarovar. There the devotees bathed, offered oblation and returned to Math by 1.30pm.

Manasarovar

Situated towards the east of Yamuna and Sri Vrindavan - it is a prevalent story that the angry tears from Radha Rani's eyes appeared as Sarovar.

vilvavane shri Krishna kunde ye kare snan / sarva pape mukt se param bhagyavan // dekh ati purve aei dhara yamunar / mansarovar chila yamuna opar // abe hailen yamunar dhara dvya / madhye mansarovar atishobhamaya //

(Bhakti Ratnakar 5/1692 – 94)

On the day of Sri Sri Vilvavan Parikrama, Sri Leelavati Goyal resident of Dehradun and sheltered disciple of Srila Gurudeva, founder of Shri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, while talking to Sripad Bhakti Vigyan Bharati Maharaj, Shri Bhakti Lalit Giri Maharaj, and other Vaishnavas, achieved Brij Raj (left the body).

All were surprised to see her fortune of getting Brij Raj in this unique way in the Vrindavan Dham. She was highly devoted to the lotus feet of Sri Guru. In 1981, in spite of being sick and old, she had performed the 84 Kosa Parikrama of Sri Brij Mandal by foot with the help of a stick. This time as well, she had performed Parikrama in a similar way. After her return to Vrindavan, she attained her Dham. Her last rites were performed on the banks of Yamuna.

Puja on the holy appearance day of Srila Gurudeva [18 Kartik 4 Nov. Sunday 1984]

On 4 Nov, Sri Utthan Ekadasi day, founder of the All India Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, most revered Srila Gurudeva Nityalila Pravistha Om 108 Shri Srimad Madhav Goswami Maharaj Vishnupad ji appeared.

Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math of Vrindavan had organized Sri Vyasa Puja in the morning. Six-bus load of devotees from Chandigarh had reached Vrindavan the previous day. Devotees from the other parts of the country could not make it, due to poor law- order situation and restricted means of transport.

Devotees worshipped and performed Aarti to the picture of Srila Gurudeva seated on a decorated throne in the Sankirtan hall. After this, Srila Acharya ji's sheltered disciples and devotees offered Pushpanjali (flowers) to the lotus feet of Srila Gurudeva. At noon, devotees received Prasad of sweets, fruits and other things offered to Srila Gurudeva.

In the evening, in a special religious assembly held in the Sankirtan hall of Sri Math, Pujyapad Tridandi Yati Srimad Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami expressed his views about the need of Sri Guru Puja. He explained that the real Guru Puja is to follow the preaching and teachings of Srila Gurudevji without any deception. He also described about the propagation of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ji's teachings in different places and the acquisition of the appearance place of Srila Prabhupada ji in Puri by the founder of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math.

These descriptions touched the hearts of the gathered devotees. Under his guidance, Tridandi Sannyasis also sang the glories of the holy life and qualities of Srila Gurudeva and prayed for his grace. Next day there was a grand celebration and Maha Prasad distribution. All the devotees felt great satisfaction.

An Addendum

In 1984 during the month of Shri Kartik-Vrata, Shri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math arranged Sri Brij Mandal Parikrama.

The significance of the places of Brijamandal, visited by devotees, described here is as per the best-known scriptures. Krishna's pastimes in all the places are not in detail as it is difficult to circumambulate the entire Brijamandal by foot.

About twenty to twenty five years ago, Sri Math used to arrange Brijamandal Parikramas where the pilgrims stayed in tents and were fortunate enough to visit many more places of Lord Krishna's pastimes and perform Kirtan. Comparatively the situation in the country seemed better then. Today with increasing crimes and heartlessness of people at large, it is dangerous for the household devotees to stay in the tents and not practical for the common person due to increasing rentals and other inconveniences.

These days the pilgrims use guesthouse arrangements and travel by bus instead of bullock carts. However, the restricted movement of the bus on the narrow streets and muddy pathways limits the number of places the devotees can visit. Also in this modern age, the ability for walking has reduced.

Actually, Shri Brij Mandal spreads across twenty-four Upavans (small forests), twelve Vans, five Parvats (mountains), seven Sarovar (ponds), seven places of footprints of Sri Krishna, seven deities of Baladev, six places of swing (Jhoolan), six places of Dan Leela and nine Kshetrapal Shivas.

Devotees often do not visit almost twelve Vans of Vrindavan due to reasons

mentioned above. However, if the devotees desire so in the future, they can visit all of them by the grace of Krishna.

List of all the places, some visited and some not, with one line description:

Twenty four upavana (small forests)

1. Gokul (in Mahavana)
2. Govardhan
3. Barsana
4. Sanket
5. Nandisvara or Nandagrama
6. Paramadara (Pramodana, in Deeg)
7. Aandi (three mile south-east of Goverdhana)
8. Seshasayi (Located one and a half miles south of Basoli, in the east of Ksirasagara village, He rested on the water and Srimati Radharani massaged His feet)
9. Mathavana
10. Unchagaon
11. Kelanvana (Sheragara)
12. Radhakunda
13. Gandarva-vana

14. Parasoli

15. Bilachu (Bilachu kunda, where Harideva appeared)

16. Vancavana (Vatsavana, places where Krishna wandered)

17. Adi Badri (Located ten mile south-west of Kamyavana. This is a beautiful place and known as the place of austerities of Sage Narayan, by whose left thigh the heavenly damsel Urvasi was born.

18. Karala (The place of Chandravali, three miles south of Khadira Vana)

19. Aanjanakha (Located one mile north-east of Barsana, Sri Krishna's eyes met with Radha's eyes, place of Indulekha)

20. Kolika Vana

21. Piyason (Located one and half miles north of Karala and one mile south of Nudholi, where Balaram quenched the thirst of Krishna)

22. Dahi Grama (Near Kota-vana, where Krishna robbed the yogurt of Gopis)

23. Kota-vana (Four miles east of Baithak, Krishna's played with his friends)

24. Raval (two miles south of Loha-vana, the birth place of Srimati Radharani)

Five Mountains

1. Sri Govardhan

2. Sri Barsana

3. Sri Nandisvara

4. Badi Charana Pahari

5. Choti Charana Pahari

Seven Sarovar (lakes)

1. Mana Sarovara (Manasi Ganga)

2. Kusum Sarovara

3. Chandra Sarovara (near Parasoli village, Sri Krishna rested at Chadra Sarovara after performing rasa dance in Parasaoli)

4. Prema Sarovara (One and half miles north of Barsana, near Gajipura)

5. Narayana Sarovara (in a nearby village of Govardhan, there is one sarovara, that seems to be the Narayana Sarovara)

6. Pavana Sarovara (In Nandagrama)

7. Mana Sarovara (Three and half miles east of Vilva-vana)

Footprints of Sri Krishna

1. Nandigrama

2. On the bank of Surabhi Kunda

3. Under the Giri Govardhan

4. On the Giri Govardhan

5. Near Hastipada

6. On Badi Charana Pahari

7. On Choti Charana Pahari

Sri Baladeva’s deity

1. Vilasa Vana
2. Aandi
3. Nandagrama
4. Unchagaon
5. Narisemari village (Where Krishna in the form of a cowherd girl, removed the anger of Radhaji)
6. Jimin village
7. Near Donda

Places of swing pastimes

1. Govardhan
2. Sanket
3. Radhakunda
4. Karhala village
5. Anjanakha
6. Vrindavan

Places of Dana-lila

1. Govardhan
2. Dana-ghati (valley)
3. Karhala
4. Kadamkhandi
5. Gahar-vana
6. Sankarikhora

Kshetrapal Shiva

1. Gopeshvara
2. Bhutesvara
3. Gokarnesvara
4. Rangesvara
5. Kamesvara
6. Pipalesvara
7. Nandisvara
8. Chaklesvara

9. Brahdesvara or Buddha Baba

Twelve forests in Vrindavan

1. Atala Vana (Here Krishna manifested the firm faith of the wives of Brahmins)

2. Kovadi (Krishna saved the Brijwasis from the forest fire of Kamsa. Ko-Nivadi - Fire Removal, also known as Davanala Kunda)

3. Vihara Vana (the wandering place of Sri Sri RadhaKrishna, There is one well also with the name of RadhaKupa)

4. Gocharana-Vana (Here Lord Varaha is seated on the bank of old Yamuna, in the west of Vihara-vana)

5. Kaliya Damana-Vana (Old Kadamba tree, Krishna climbed on it and jumped into Yamuna's lake to control the Kaliya demon)

6. Gopalan Vana (Here Nanda Maharaj donated cows to Brahmins to bring auspiciousness to Krishna)

7. Nikunja Vana (Seva-Kunja - the eternal wandering place of Radha Krishna)

8. Nidhu Vana (North of Nikunja Vana)

9. Radha Vana or Radha Bagh (On the banks of Yamuna in the north-east of Vrindavan)

10. Jhulan vana (South of Radha Bagh)

11. Gahar Vana (South of Jhulana Vana, the place of Danalila)

12. Papada Vana (South of Gahar Vana, Here, Sri Krishna gave the darshan of Badri Narayana to gopis).